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POETRY.

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Single Numbers of THE LIVING AGE, 18 cents.

TWO PORTRAITS.

I BAR the door on friends to-night,
And sit me here alone, apart,
By mine own hearth-fire, red and warm,
While round the house an angry storm
Blows, wild with wind and rain;
I sit me down alone to fight
A silent battle with my heart,
While yet the strife is not in vain.

Two pictures in my hand I take,
It is with these I have to do;
The face of one is passing fair,
The other sweet beyond compare,
And both have tender eyes;
One pair as placid as a lake
That mirrors heaven's own tender blue,
And one as dark as midnight skies.

I turn me first unto the face
That holds my manhood in its thrall;
The reddest rose cannot eclipse
The perfect crimson of those lips,
That seem with smiles to stir;
The soft black tresses interlace
Upon her forehead white, and all
That lovely is unites in her.

My soul goes down before that smile,
Before the magic of those eyes;
Hot pulses set my cheeks aflame
If but a stranger speak her name;
The clasping of her hand —
The hand I held in mine erewhile —
Hath power to bid emotions rise
That put me past mine own command.

Yet looking on that face to-night,
By this red hearth-fire here apart,
My soul becomes a prey to doubt,
My nature's better part speaks out
With solemn warning voice,
"Yield not thyself to false delight,
That rose hath thorns to wound thine heart,
Pass on, and make a nobler choice."

The red lips wear a mocking smile,
Alas! I fear me, holy prayer
Hath never passed those portals through,
Since pleasure dried the childish dew
They wore in far-off years;
The melting eyes with lure and wile
Peep out from clusters of her hair,
But never soften into tears.

The hand that lightly holds the rose
With such a free imperious grace,
Hath it been ever raised to lift
The poor from out the mire, to gift
The wretched with relief?
Alas! I know, and she too knows,
She is not worthy of my race,
And yet I love her to my grief.

She is not meet to stand beside
My mother, in mine ancient home,
She is not pure enough to rear
An heir unto my father's heir,

And yet my weak heart clings
About her, rocked on passion's tide,
Like some lost boat on ocean's foam,
Far out of sight of better things.

I turn me to the other face —
My mother's — framed in silver hair;
Oh, lady! tender, brave, and true,
With smiling in those eyes of blue,
Upon whose life benign
Fell never shadow of disgrace,
I may have given thee cause for care,
But not for shame, dear mother mine!

No, not for shame, not yet, not yet;
Oh, mother! in the bygone years,
When by thy side my book I spelt,
When at thy knee I trusting knelt,
And spake the holy name;
I might be doomed to bring regret,
To strike the bitter fount of tears,
I was not meant to bring thee shame.

Nay! let me rather to the grave
Go childless, when my day is done,
And let the home of my old race
Become a stranger's dwelling-place,

Before I weakly share
The life my noble mother gave,
With one unworthy of her son,
Though beautiful beyond compare.

I am but bound as Samson was,
With "seven green withes" of passion's growth,
The secret of my strength I kept,
Though my Delilah prayed and wept,
And I can break apart
Her bonds, like swaths of summer grass;
And be she tender, be she wroth,
Take from her hold my captive heart.

Two pictures lie within my gaze,
I turn me from the fairer face,
The choice is made, my mother dear,
Thou hast no shame from me to fear,
I break the charmer's spell;
I turn my feet from dangerous ways,
From luring eyes, from fatal grace,
And bid false love a long farewell!

All the Year Round.

DAYBREAK IN PARIS.

THE rosy gleam of newly-kindled day
Just tips yon gilded dome, and Paris wakes
Before the lingering stars depart, or breaks
The full-orbed morning, debonair and gay:
The country wains, with loads of fragrant hay,
Creep slowly in, and Norman "Surefoot" makes
His bell-clad head-gear jingle, as he takes
A sly bite, half in earnest, half in play.
Thus, while late sleepers dream, the busy toil
To feed the idle, and the blue-smocked clown
Is happier far than they who glove their hands.
His sweet-breathed hay to him is better spoil
Than ill-got gold, his team worth all the town,
And his fair France the bravest of all lands.

Temple Bar.

ROSSLYN.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE LIGHTS OF "MAGA."

I.

THE HEROES OF THE "NOCES."

I. *Wilson — Lockhart — Hogg.*

It is now sixty-five years since the birth of "Maga," and it occurs to us that there might be interest in a series of articles on the writers whose reputations are associated with her fortunes. If the magazine owe them all, they owed much to the magazine, for it gave them the freest scope for the exercise of powers which were stimulated in a brilliant and genial fellowship. It has always been the boast of the conductors of "Maga," that their contributors have formed a literary family working in pleasant harmony with their chief as with each other, and cultivating social as well as literary relations. So it has come about that we have cherished the old traditions, paying affectionate reverence to the memories of the men who set their successors a bright example. It may be that in undertaking this series of sketches we shall not unreasonably be suspected of partiality. And prepossessions at least, are so natural, that we do not care to disavow them. But the more we have learned to love and honor, in a long and intimate acquaintance, the less temptation shall we feel to be uncandid. The first writers in the magazine had no doubt their faults, literary and otherwise, as none knew better than themselves; nor shall we treat them so disrespectfully as to try to gloss these over. For we know that they can afford to be shown as they were; nor will they lose anything by frank and honest criticism. If not, we cannot help it. We propose to group, with such method as the circumstance will permit, the lights that have shed their lustre on our pages. But while reviewing them chiefly in their relations to the magazine, it would be impossible to do justice to the versatility of their gifts, without glancing, in our notices, at their general writings. We have no idea of making our sketches biographical; yet occasionally biographical facts must be essential to their illustration. We shall make incidental allu-

sions to habits and tastes, in attempting to give life and color to our impressions; and we may add that, in the private correspondence in our possession, we have access to exceptional sources of information.

The heroes of the "Noctes" were the fathers of the magazine. Young fathers they were, with the exuberant spirits of youth as well as its strength and freshness, when the vigorous offspring of their brains sprang suddenly into existence. But it was more than two years after the appearance of the first number that Wilson's lively imagination originated the famous individuality of Christopher North; that grave, potent, and omniscient senior, affecting to prop his infirmities on the formidable crutch, and swathing his muscular limbs in the bandages of the gouty valetudinarian. The first glimpse we have of Christopher, by the way, is in one of those fictitious advertisements of mythical works, which used to figure on the outer sheet of the periodical. There was an announcement of the forthcoming "Autobiography of Christopher North, Esq., Editor of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, in 3 vols. 8vo, with numerous engravings of men and things." After glancing at the autobiographer's manifold experiences, beginning with dramatic adventures in Paris during the French Revolution, and embracing extensive travels in Europe, the advertisement goes on to observe, that "the age at which he has arrived is such as to convince him of the folly of either hoping or fearing much for himself." It is pointed out by Mr. Shelton Mackenzie, the acute editor of the American edition of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," that Christopher, according to a subsequent assertion of his, had been born in 1751, which would make him seventy-one at the commencement of the "Noctes," and eighty-four at their conclusion. That assumption of advanced age and a ripe maturity of judgment was quite in harmony with the spirit of mystification with which the magazine was conceived and conducted. Its characteristics were the force, the fire, and the freshness of youth; its faults were those of irrepressible and impulsive genius.

Lockhart, who was Christopher's most indefatigable and efficient coadjutor, states its case and makes its apology in that singularly clever production of his, "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." After setting forth the reasons which had encouraged Mr. Blackwood and his literary allies to launch their new venture — reasons which were mainly based on their antagonism to the politics and principles of criticism of the *Edinburgh Review*, he goes on: —

But the persons who are supposed to have taken the lead in directing the new forces, wanted many of those qualities which were most necessary to insure success to their endeavors; and they possessed others, which, though in themselves admirably qualified for enabling them to conduct their projects successfully, tended, in the manner in which they made use of them, to throw many unnecessary obstacles in their way. In short, they were very young, or very inexperienced men, who, although passionately fond of literature, and even well skilled in many of its finest branches, were by no means accurately acquainted with the structure and practice of literature, as it exists at this day in Britain. They saw well enough in what respects the literature of the day had been allowed to fall into a condition unworthy of the old spirit of English literature, but they do not seem to have seen with equal perspicacity in how many points the literary practice of our time has been improved, beyond that of the ages preceding. With their minds full of love and veneration for the great serious authors of all nations and ages, and especially so for all the master spirits of their own time, they appear to have entertained, also, a most singular warmth of sympathy for all the extravagances, caprices, and madneses of frolic humor, that were ever in any age embodied in the vehicle of fine language, or made use of as the instruments of powerful intellect. . . . They admired rather too indiscriminately, and whatever they admired they never thought it could be improper or unsafe for them to imitate. They approached the lists of literary warfare with the spirit at bottom of true knights; but they had come from the woods and the cloisters, and not from the cities and haunts of active men, and they had armed themselves, in addition to their weapons of the right temper, with many other weapons of offence which, although sanctioned in former times by the practice of the heroes in whose repositories they had

found them rusting, had now become utterly exploded, and were regarded, and justly regarded, as entirely unjustifiable and disgraceful by all who surveyed, with modern eyes, the arena of their modern exertions.

That last metaphor seems to us exceedingly happy. The young knights, or rather knight-errants, charged with their visors down, and as their range of vision was necessarily circumscribed, they ran their tilts blindly and recklessly. Their blood grew heated, moreover, in the excitement and joy of the *mêlée*, and they struck out more wildly as the struggle grew more hot. Strokes were dealt here and there, which were speedily regretted and repented. But those sins, which one of the culprits has so candidly confessed, are the most certain proofs of their powers. The magazine, in spite of them, made itself a position from the first, and steadily advanced in influence and authority; the fact being, that it was carried through by its originality and brilliancy. The editor was a shrewd man of the world, and an excellent judge of literature, who soon succeeded in getting his wild team in hand; while young contributors, with a wide range of reading and a variety of rather unusual accomplishments, began quickly to tone down and ripen in experience. We may measure the advance by estimating the distance between "Christopher in the Tent," which came out in 1819, and those remarkable "Noctes," the first of which appeared only three years later. The consecutive sets of papers are conceived in similar style; and in the former, of course, were the germs of the "Noctes." Yet what a difference between the two in thought and tone, in learning and in delicate intellectual fancy! Under canvas with Christopher in Braemar, the boisterous and farcical predominate; there is plenty of fun and frolic in pages enlivened with songs and snatches of poetry, that are sometimes sweet and often witty. But the party seem to think they must become bores, if they break away from their horseplay: any serious talk is introduced almost apologetically, and indeed it strikes us as strangely incongruous; the literary criticisms, even on eminent contemporaries,

too frequently degenerate into rough personalities, as Christopher himself has to own very often; and should a disputant threaten to become tedious or discursive, he is summarily cut short with a challenge to drink. While, as for the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," after Wilson had almost monopolized the authorship, they are — what we shall attempt to show at the conclusion of our article.

It was a fortunate chance for themselves, for "Maga," and, we may add, for periodical literature, which brought Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart into intimate relations with each other, and with Mr. Blackwood. It gave them precisely the field they needed for the exercise and development of their remarkable powers; while the strong good sense and sound literary judgment of the firm-willed and self-reliant publisher, after sundry sharp lessons in the shape of law proceedings, which he had the wisdom to lay to heart, served to repress the indiscretions of his less responsible young allies. Wilson and Lockhart — *par nobile fratrum* — seem to have been born to shine in conjunction. With many brilliant qualities in common, each could often supply what the other wanted. They were nearly of an age, and had very similar tastes. The start in life of both had been what the world, especially in those days, would have pronounced a failure. Being young Scotchmen of brilliant parts, overflowing with intellectual ambition and energy, both were originally intended for the bar. They might have fairly hoped, after due probation among the idlers in the Outer House, to gain the favors of the solicitors and the ears of "the Fifteen;" to be advanced to snug sheriffships by their party, and to rest, in the fulness of time, from more active labors on the serene dignity of the bench. There seemed no reason why either should not have figured more conspicuously in the high political office of lord advocate, and made his mark in association with Cabinets in the administration of Scottish affairs. Either, as the event subsequently showed, could have thrown himself heart and soul into politics: there could be no question as to their capacity for mastering legal princi-

ples or drawing pleadings; and Wilson, as shrewd a judge of character as Lockhart, might, like Lockhart, have become a cosmopolitan man of the world. But their tastes or intellectual defects shaped themselves differently; and we at least can only rejoice at what has been unmixed gain to the world of letters. Wilson, with all his marvellous activity, had neither liking nor patience for legal drudgery; while Lockhart found from the first that he could hardly hope to succeed as a speaker. Even had success in the profession of the law been of vital consequence to Wilson, his fervid poetical temperament and brilliant imaginative faculties might nevertheless have broken away from the control of his calmer reason. As it happened, he found himself absolutely his own master, and free to follow his predestined bent. He had inherited a handsome fortune, and was relatively a rich man. Had he ever weighed the future deliberately — which we doubt — he might have looked forward with confidence to triumphs in the courts. He had not only the tongue of a fluent speaker, as he showed in his declamation at the Burns Festival and elsewhere; but those rarer and more commanding gifts of persuasion, with which he might have rivalled the forensic oratory of a Clerk, a Cranstoun, or a Jeffrey. But he was a strange mixture of activity and indolence. Insensibly abandoning himself to his inclinations, he glided into the vocation that gradually engrossed him; and from trifling with the pen, like so many of the briefless, became a literary man by profession, and the chief pillar of "Maga."

Lockhart was differently situated. He has been described, and very recently, by eminent literary authorities, who should have been better informed, as "a man of the people;" and it has been even said that he was indebted to the assistance of friends for his education at the university. No assertions could be more unfounded or ridiculous. Assuredly there is nothing opprobrious in being a man of the people who has made himself. But Lockhart, as it happened, although the son of a minister and born in a manse, was a cadet of one of the most ancient families in the

south of Scotland—of a family whose martial exploits are historical. His father, who had taken Presbyterian orders, like not a few Scottish gentlemen of the time, was possessed of a comfortable independence of his own, and had, moreover, married a co-heiress. Assuredly the wealthy clergyman had no need to "send round the hat" that his son might be helped to Oxford; and the story carries absurdity on the face of it. But naturally John Gibson Lockhart, as a younger son, had merely such a modest competence as might serve to start him in life. His literary tastes were as pronounced as those of his future friend; but he had the world before him, and his way to make in it. With the consciousness of his fine talents, he had no lack of ambition, and he naturally coveted fortune and position. Could he once make his mark at the bar, he might count upon friends to help him forward. And he had the qualities that might have made a great lawyer, as assuredly he was exceptionally gifted in a way that must have formed an effective advocate and a dangerous debater. He had a logical mind, acute reasoning powers, extraordinarily quick perceptions of flaws and fallacies, a talent for subtle analysis of principles and sophistries, a ready wit, and a tenacious memory. Above all, he was imbued with the instinct of sarcasm, which must have supplied him with a whole arsenal of weapons in the shape of irony, ridicule, and blighting invective. Had he been blessed with Wilson's self-forgetfulness when standing up for a set speech, he might have been as formidable in the Parliament House as caustic old John Clerk of Eldin, whom he has painted in "Peter's Letters" with equal *verve* and pungency. We may hazard the prediction that, sooner or later, he would have found his way to London all the same, although not as editor of the *Quarterly*. Success would have stimulated him to higher flights. He would have wearied of the local Edinburgh society with the provincial tone which he has satirized in the "Letters;" he would have left the Parliament House to enter at the Inns of Court; would have worked for a seat in Parliament, allied himself to the influential Tory coteries he could have helped alike as writer and debater; and seen his talents brilliantly rewarded in the prospect of services to come. Alas, like, we have run up a castle in the air for him, which we dare to say he may many times have dreamed for himself. But if it were so, the fabric crumbled at

the foundations. Time after time he failed in his attempts at making anything like a reasonably effective speech.

The duller victims of his wit had their revenge when the lively young master of satire and caricature, rising to some formal motion, stammered and hesitated; and possibly grave dignitaries on the bench, who knew that they had been ridiculed by his pencil, chuckled inwardly over his discomfiture. Lockhart, who was as proud as he was nervously self-conscious, had too good cause for discouragement to care to persevere. But while he renounced his hopes of rising by the law, his was not a nature to accept failure with complacency, still less to resign itself to inactivity. So, like Wilson, he made a pursuit of what might otherwise have amused his leisure. And if a life of letters was less lucrative, and if, for a time at least, it placed him less *en évidence*, it was not without its immediate compensations. He had a genius for writing, and consequently he enjoyed it. With a remarkable capacity for sustained labor, like Wilson, he dashed off his best work, almost without sensible effort, from a brain teeming with ideas. Like Wilson, for a young man who lived anything but the life of an anchorite, he had accumulated very miscellaneous stores of knowledge. He had travelled, and going out of the beaten English track, had formed an unusual acquaintance with foreign literature; while, with a naturally pugnacious turn of intellect, he knew that he only needed practice and experience to become an accomplished master of literary fence. What he desired was an opening for the exercise of his powers, with the assurance of addressing himself to appreciative readers; and that opening was offered him at the turning-point of his career.

With Wilson and Lockhart we have classed James Hogg. Indeed the Ettrick Shepherd was emphatically the hero of the "Noctes." It was his rare individuality which inspired the fancies that created an idealized and glorified shepherd-poet, embodying the best of the wit, eloquence, and pathos in that most original series of articles. The finest passages Wilson ever penned, his happiest thoughts, his most profound philosophy, his most glowing rhapsodies on the subjects that charmed him everywhere, and in Scotland in especial, were all placed appropriately in the mouth of the Shepherd. While, at the same time, it must be admitted that the writers of the "Noctes" took good care to adjust the

balance of nature, by making their shepherd-friend figure as a buffoon. But after all, it was from the life that they painted him; and his vanity was quick to forget the wounds that were being constantly inflicted on it. With his genius, with the warmth of his heart, and his many engaging qualities, Hogg was the most feather-brained and conceited of mortals. As he naively observes in the opening sentence of an autobiography which is the frankest of all frank self-revelations: "I like to write about myself; in fact there are few things which I like better." We may imagine, then, how gratifying it was to him to be kept monthly before the public in a magazine that was generally read and discussed. A man far less covetous of fame and notoriety might well have felt flattered at being made the natural mouthpiece of the most brilliant utterances in the circle of the wits who gathered round the immortal Christopher. For, although his brother wags might audaciously attribute erudition to a man who had only had some months of "schooling" in his boyhood; though they might gravely propose to the countryman from the Braes of Yarrow to write and review fashionable books; though they might tempt him with the promise of Parliamentary triumphs, and assure him that he might have a distinguished political career; yet, on the other hand, his natural talents were known to be so considerable, that the Shepherd of the "Noctes" seemed scarcely a caricature. There was no saying of what the peasant might not be capable, who had not only written "Queen Hynde" and "Kilmeny," but "run" a weekly paper of his own, to which he was the chief if not the sole contributor. It was not with Hogg as with Dr. Scott, the unlucky "Odontist" — a dentist whom Lockhart in a mirthful hour selected as the mouthpiece of some of his own most sparkling contributions, till the victim at last was brought to believe that he was in reality a distinguished literary genius. Doubtless Hogg, could he have had his way, would gladly have picked and chosen among the articles attributed to him. From time to time he was annoyed, irritated, or furious at the liberties which, as we must admit, were most unjustifiably taken with him. We can fully sympathize with his bitter complaints that sentiments had often been put into his mouth of which he was heartily ashamed, while all his expostulations had been persistently disregarded; and indeed, after he had made formal announce-

ment that nothing without his name subscribed was to be regarded as genuine, Lockhart did not hesitate to sign as well as to write for him. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that his normal state of mind was one of complacency at the conspicuous part he was made to play; and the proof of it is, that although he never actually wrote for the "Noctes," he repeatedly furnished hints, songs, and stories, knowing well the use to which they were to be turned; while he continued a habitual contributor to "Maga."

It was highly characteristic of Hogg that he claimed to have originated the magazine. And unquestionably he had the idea in common with other men, as with Mr. Blackwood, who finally decided to carry it out. The supercilious despotism of Constable (the "czar"), the autocracy and the financial success of the *Edinburgh*, had made the starting of an opposition periodical inevitable sooner or later. But Hogg's scheme, so far as it was not simply in embryo, was based, as we might expect of the man, on the notion of his editorship — a suggestion which must have appeared ludicrous to everybody but himself. Assuredly Blackwood, who was a shrewd man of business, would never have pitted against Jeffrey and Constable the individual who had just brought his own "Spy" to grief; nor intrusted the direction of his literary and political articles to the self-educated shepherd, who was simple as a child and touchy as a savage. Hogg might please himself with boasting of his claims to the paternity; and we know that he often grumbled at the ingratitude which had intrusted his imaginary offspring to other guidance. But he was more than content to take his place among the contributors: he had the satisfaction of knowing that his articles were highly valued in spite of the rough and hasty workmanship; while the remuneration was invariably welcome, as he was always struggling with difficulties. His correspondence with his publisher is a striking confirmation of the resemblance of his portrait as painted in the "Noctes." It shows that strange blending of the shepherd and the literary man which Wilson has developed with so much humor and effect; and all the writer's childlike simplicity, with his bright perceptions and constitutional irritability. We shall have more to say of the Shepherd presently when we come to notice his writings. But we must add in the mean time, in justice to him as to his friends, that they all loved him if they

laughed at him and with him, and that they rendered him many important services. We see, from unpublished letters, that Lockhart was invariably anxious to befriend him; while Wilson, after showing him uniform kindness in the course of their long and cordial connection, made a journey to Ettrick in bleak November to lay the body of the shepherd-poet "in the mounds," remaining bareheaded in sad meditations by the grave when the rest of the mourners had left the kirkyard.

But to come back to Wilson himself. To estimate him as a writer, we must know him as a man; for his works, with all their amazing versatility, are the freshest and most unreserved expression of a singularly vigorous and many-sided nature. In their generally genial tone, as in their occasional outbursts of strong personal feelings, in their eloquent expression, in their broad philosophy and graceful scholarship, in the fun and pathos blending and alternating, in their frank abandonment for the moment to the inspirations of the predominating thought, in their shrewd analysis of character, in their graphic portraiture of life, and, above all, in their vividly realistic pictures of nature, — they are the very Wilson himself — the student, the Bohemian, the bookworm, the sportsman, the professor, the kindest, merriest, and most entertaining of jovial companions. In the "Noctes" in especial, he confounded all these qualities. And he transfused the whole with the fire of his genius, kindling at intervals into Berserker-like outbreaks of inspiration. The beauties are scattered broadcast, and we shall find it no easy matter to do them justice by casual references or short selections. The chief fascination of his writings, which abode by them to the last, sprang from the perennial freshness of the recollections by which they are impregnated. His boyish remembrances had engraved themselves indelibly. Associations awakened the chords that vibrated to the memory, and straightway some picture was vividly conjured up in Highland snowstorm or smiling lake scenery. Nor was it merely the material impressions that his recollections instinctively revived. It seems to us as if his trains of ideas were continually carrying him back to his youthful manner of thinking, although these were governed by the chastened sobriety of a judgment that had been steadily maturing. And to the last his sympathies were as broad and generous as his feelings were easily moved by the bright, the melancholy, or the beauti-

ful, whether in art or nature. He had strong opinions and convictions, and he expressed them with the masculine decision which was the very essence of his character. But never did critic, where he saw reason to praise, bestow his commendation with more generous discrimination. He had not a shade of jealousy in his composition; and nothing was more congenial to him, or gave him more heart-felt pleasure, than the discovery and encouragement of rising talent. It was then, above all, that old Christopher became young again, as he was reminded of his own literary beginnings. And yet, as the mentor of ardent youth, he was to the full as judicious as he was capable and kindly. The intelligent aspirant must have been quick to recognize that it was his strongest points, or those which gave most hopeful promise, which had been singled out for commendation; while even more valuable than the praise were the painstaking criticisms which directed attention to the faults or the shortcomings.

As for Wilson's own blemishes, they are conspicuous enough, especially to critics of the present generation; and we need feel the less inclination to blink them, that they do him little discredit. The most obvious of them were closely akin to his beauties — perhaps we may say inseparable from his beauties; and so it was that to the last he never altogether got rid of some, while very possibly others actually grew upon him. Like most fine writers in his favorite style, when at his best he wrote almost from inspiration. We can fancy that, as his pen flew over the paper, his thoughts were often outstripping it by a sentence or two; and his daughter records exploits in his interesting biography which almost approach those mythical feats of which Christopher brags in his "Noctes." To that inspiration we owe the dash and the fire which turn even dull subjects into bright reading. But that inspiration was not to be curbed at a moment's notice by the severe taste and the transcendent refinement which are the attributes of gentlemen who weigh each word and polish each carefully considered period. Wilson, besides, was outspoken to a fault; and being as truthful as he was earnest, with his impetuous nature he was not unfrequently personal. And sincerity and honesty are such admirable qualities in a critic, that we may condone some of the defects which are their almost necessary consequences. The age, too, as we have already remarked, was an age of person-

alities; when one set of writers made war on another, singling out some antagonistic school for attacks, until at last they came to confound men with their opinions, and even fiercely assailed the private characters which may have been in great measure the creations of their prejudiced fancies. We do not mean to apologize; we are merely explaining. So it came about, that Christopher and his colleagues, like their literary opponents, frequently in the heat of warfare indulged in epithets, assertions, or insinuations, which subsequently they saw reason to regret or retract. That they were occasionally coarse, we are compelled to admit; although on that score, with our more delicate or more conventional susceptibilities, it is difficult to judge them fairly. The plainness of language of the English classics of the last century was still in favor with popular writers; and if a reaction against it had begun to set in, that reaction had chiefly originated with men inclined to go to the opposite extreme of squeamishness, — with men whom the masculine Wilson was inclined, for other reasons, to hold in supreme contempt. But Wilson, it will be said, is sometimes offensive in his conception and elaboration of scenes, as well as in chance words and incidental phrases. Granted. And yet not unfrequently the genius of the man is never more evident than in that; and had we had the brain and the fancy to conceive some of those scenes, we should hardly have had the self-control not to shape our ideas in the images that so forcibly reflect them, although, foreseeing the storm they might provoke, we bowed beforehand to its justice. We might have softened, perhaps, and so emasculated and spoiled; but Wilson, whether for better or worse, seldom seems to have balked his fancy. We have specially in our mind at this moment the memorable meeting of the "Red Tarn Club." It may be remembered that there he is describing, in very different styles, the death of an unfortunate Quaker, who had gone astray in the solitudes of Helvellyn. He asks us himself which of his versions we like the best — whether the funny or the affecting one; and though, as matter of taste, we prefer the latter, we confess we have been more impressed by the former. We are at once fascinated, shocked, and repelled by the exceedingly grim humor of "the hungry and thirsty old ravens" who form the Red Tarn Club, flocking to "the Ordinary," — by the spectacle of the demons in

"glossy black feather coats and black breeches," whetting their beaks and chuckling over the prospects of the feast. It is more than a spectacle or a satire. It is a slight, but most suggestive, analysis of the very decided individualities of the members of that society of feathered gourmands from the president downwards. Yet the effect is greatly marred to us by the consciousness that the study is an outrage on art as a mockery of mortality; while tainting the fresh air of the Cumberland hills with the revolting details of the dissecting-room or the dead-house, seems almost sacrilegious in a poet who worshipped nature so reverentially. But Christopher, like Salvator Rosa, and Blake, and Wiertz, and all fantastically powerful artists, was fond of contrasting the terrible with the beautiful. He loved to blend the romantic with the sombre; and occasionally, as in the meeting of the ravens, his inspirations carried him too far. And, by way of set-off, we may recall another picture from the "Noctes," at least as striking, where he has just reined up his fancy in time. It is a picture of a king of the vultures, attributed to the Shepherd, and contains, in a few crisp sentences, the material for a magnificent epic.

Birds o' prey. That's a grand subject for him. Save us! what he would mak o' the King o' the Vultures! Of course he would breed him on Imaus. His flight is far, and he fears not famine. He has a hideous head of his own — fiend-like eyes — nostrils that woo the murky air — and beak fit to dig into brain and heart. Don't forget Prometheus and his liver. Then dream of being sick in a desert place, and of seeing the Vulture-King alight within ten yards of you — folding up his wings very composedly — and then coming with his horrid bald scalp close to your ear, and beginning to pick rather gently at your face, as if afraid to find you alive. You groan; and he hobbles away, with an angry shriek, to watch you die. You see him whetting his beak upon a stone, and gaping wide with hunger and thirst. Horror pierces both your eyelashes, before the bird begins to scoop; and you have already all the talons of both his iron feet in your throat. Your heart's blood freezes; but notwithstanding that, by-and-by he will suck it up.

That is poetry in prose if you like — poetry, wild, vivid, and dramatic, when even in the intense agony that protracts minutes into hours, act is crowded upon act and scene on scene. And if Wilson had been in the habit of measuring the divine afflatus mechanically, like the strokes of a forcing-pump, we might have

been spared the ravens of Helvellyn, but we should have lost the vulture of Imaus.

But to return to that freshness which we have asserted as his perennial charm, and to the circumstances that created and perpetuated it. He had a magnificent constitution; for long he enjoyed almost perfect health; he had been brought up in the country, and he returned to his rural loves whenever he could find or make an opportunity. From the first, his active brain had never been overworked; and it was characteristic of his very rational education, that when he was to quit the manse in which he had passed those happy years which did so much towards moulding his mind and his future, he asked and obtained permission to spend some months in taking leave of his early haunts and habits. A waste of time many people might have called it, but happily those who had the care of him knew better. So all through life, his holidays were an important point of education with him; and often his best work must have been shaped out when he was almost unconscious of mental effort. Nothing of his that is destined to live smells either of the lamp or the study. His mind may have been unconscious of effort, yet it was working indefatigably as his muscles, and passing treasures into the charge of his memory. When the stalwart gentleman-tramp—he has drawn himself to the life in "Christopher at the Lakes,"—with the leonine look, the flowing yellow mane, and the broad shirt-collar thrown widely open, was striding over wild passes among the Highland mountains, or following, rod in hand, the windings of some rushing stream in the pastoral valleys of the Border, his keen observation was noting the changing effects which give their color and perpetual variety to his endless panoramas of nature. He came to know nature as well as he loved her; and so we measure the distance that divides him from her conventional admirers, who either write in the recollections of cursory impressions, or have picked up their superficial knowledge at second hand. So the subjects that his eye embraced as it followed the circlings of the eagle over the heights of Ben Cruachan, or as he rode homewards to Tibby Shiels' 'twixt sunlight and moonrise across the silvery waters of St. Mary's Loch, are transferred for us to his pages in pen and ink, with marvellous truth, beauty, and originality.

Nor was it only the eye of sense that was busy in those happy holiday times.

Between sleeping and waking of a summer day, when resting from his toils on some mossy bank, and looking up to the cloud-flecked skies, through the sylvan trellis-work of the foliage, the fancy of the poet would be far away, dreaming the dreams and seeing the visions that must come unbidden if they come at all. Perhaps he has nothing more beautiful than the "Fairy's Funeral," which he saw in the spirit on the banks of the Orchy, when moonlight was silvering the summit of Ben Cruachan.

There it was, on a little river-island, that once, whether sleeping or waking we know not, we saw celebrated a Fairy's Funeral. First we heard small pipes playing, as if no bigger than hollow rushes that whisper to the night-winds; and more piteous than aught that trills from earthly instrument, was the scarce audible dirge! It seemed to float over the stream, every foam-bell emitting a plaintive note, till the airy anthem came floating over my couch, and then alighted without ceasing among the heather. The pattering of little feet was heard, as if living creatures were arranging themselves in order, and then there was nothing but a more ordered hymn. The harmony was like the melting of musical dewdrops; and sung, without words, of sorrow and death. . . . Hundreds of creatures, no taller than the crest of the lapwing, and all hanging down their veiled heads, stood in a circle on a green plat among the rocks; and in the midst was a bier, framed, as it seemed, of flowers unknown to the Highland hills; and on the bier a Fairy, lying with uncovered face, pale as the lily, and motionless as the snow. . . . They sang alternate measures, not louder than the twittering of the awakened wood-lark before it goes up the dewy air, but dolorous and full of the desolation of death. The flower-bier stirred; for the spot on which it lay sank slowly down, and in a few moments the green sward was smooth as ever—the very dews glittering above the buried Fairy. A cloud passed over the moon, and, with a choral lament, the funeral troop sailed dusily away, heard afar off, so still was the midnight solitude of the glen.

But even Highland scenes and Border glens must be peopled with other folk than fairies, if the reminiscences are to have their appropriate completeness and animation; and Christopher, treading in the footsteps of Scott, shows us that the inhabitants of such a country as Scotland may be truthfully made as picturesque as its romantic scenery. He knew as well as Hogg—we may add, as Lockhart—that the characteristic romance of an earnest but impressionable nation like the Scotch is to be sought chiefly in the cottages of the lower orders; that there are poems in the every-day annals of the poor,

and passions at work under commonplace exteriors; that the most tender feelings and the deepest sympathies may be hidden away in unsuspected nooks and corners. And if he was not born in a shealing like Hogg, he loved to frequent the cottages and farmhouses: many of the most touching passages in his "Essays," as in his "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," are the fruits of the hearty and kindly nature which charmed the timid and the cautious into involuntary confidence, causing intellectual and social differences to be forgotten. Peasants and children took to the large-hearted man who talked to them so familiarly, so pleasantly, and so sympathetically; who showed no condescension, because he seemed conscious of no superiority; and who cheered them in their cares and their troubles by his manner as much as his words. They took to him as dogs and children take to the friends they know by instinct. And Wilson repaid their confidences by reproducing the morals of his humble lives with all the power of his cultivated genius, and the simplicity of one of themselves. "The Cottar's Saturday Night" has its counterpart in many a prose idyl he carelessly threw off from his memory.

Yet, though he loves to expatiate by preference on the more beautiful aspects of humble Scottish life, no one can say that he has consciously flattered his country people. No one knew better that pastoral innocence, except in childhood, is a dream of the poets and a myth of the golden age: and as he has taken sorrow more often than happiness for his themes, so he has not shrunk from depicting rural vice and crime. Nay, not unfrequently, there as elsewhere, he has brought out in almost objectionable detail what perhaps he had better have been content to indicate. But if he excels in the pathetic or the dramatic, he revels in the humorous. See him hold the mirror up to nature, where nature had turned out oddities and eccentricities! Hear him on the good-humored Bohemians of society, on the men who had strayed from the respectable beaten paths, or on those who, although coldly regarded by the strait-laced, were really the enemies of nobody but themselves. Like James V. of facetious memory, the accomplished scholar courted adventures, and was always finding himself, much to his satisfaction, in the strangest company. We can understand that in his love of the unsophisticated, and his contempt for what was conventional, he had something of a fellow-feel-

ing for tramps, tinkers, cairds, gipsies, poachers, — for the love of the sport, — *et id genus omne*. Not unfrequently a passing roadside acquaintance, when the hours flew by with jest, song, and story, had been prefaced by a fair stand-up fight; for the wanderer was as ready of fist as of tongue. Even after he had attained the dignity of the professorship, he had to own to a couple of his future students that he had just been the hero of a single combat at Hawick Fair. Of course he had figured as champion of the weak; but even then the announcement must have scandalized the staid young Scotchmen had he not previously excited their admiration by a display of his extraordinary mental powers. And reading between the lines in the "Noctes" or the "Recreations," we come upon many a similar, though tacit, confession, as we acknowledge the graphic realism of some Smollett-like scene described with inimitable spirit and drollery.

The reminiscences date back to boyhood, and even to childhood, — as when "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket," retracing the angler's progress, conjures up

the new-breeched urchin, standing on the low bridge of the little bit burnie. . . . A tug — a tug! With face ten times flushed and pale by turns ere you could count ten, he at last has strength, in the agitation of his fear and joy, to pull away at the monster — and there he lies in his beauty among the gowans and the greensward, for he has whapped him right over his head and far away, a fish a quarter of an ounce in weight, and, at the very least, two inches long!

And next we have the excited child rushing over the house, carrying his prize on a plate, and showing the monster to everybody. We know from the biography by his daughter that it is precisely as little Master Jack Wilson would have behaved, even had we not felt we were being favored with a personal sketch in that most veracious touch of his refusing to wash his hands before dinner in the pride of the scales adhering to his thumb-nails. As Dickens drew the most lifelike scenes in "David Copperfield" from his own hardships as a little outcast in London, so Wilson enlivens his miscellaneous writings by perpetual autobiographical reminiscences *passim*. Nor has he anything much finer in the way of description than that of the parish of the Mearns near Paisley, where he spent his happiest years in charge of the minister. We find it in the opening of his "May-day."

Art thou beautiful, as of old, O wild, moorland, sylvan, and pastoral Parish! the Paradise in which our spirit dwelt beneath the glorious dawning of life—can it be, beloved world of boyhood, that thou art indeed beautiful as of old? Though round and round thy boundaries in half an hour could fly the flapping dove—though the martins, wheeling to and fro that ivied and wall-flowered room of a Castle, central in its own domain, seem in their most distant flight to glance their crescent wings over a vale rejoicing apart in another kirk-spire, yet how rich in streams, and rivulets, and rills, each with its own peculiar murmur—art Thou with thy bold bleak exposure, sloping upwards in ever lustrous undulations to the portals of the East! How endless the interchange of woods and meadows, glens, dells, and broomy nooks, without number, among the banks and braes! And then of human dwellings—how rises the smoke, ever and anon, into the sky, all neighboring on each other, so that the cock-crow is heard from homestead to homestead; while as you wander onwards, each roof still rises unexpectedly—and as solitary, as if it had been far remote. Fairest of Scotland's thousand parishes—neither Highland nor Lowland, but undulating,—let us again use the descriptive word; like the sea in sunset after a day of storms—yes, Heaven's blessing be upon thee! Thou art indeed beautiful as of old!

It may be the license of the poetry of the affections to apostrophize the Mearns as the fairest of Scotch parishes. Whether it be still "beautiful as ever," as we have never seen it we cannot say. And, to tell the truth, we have no wish to see it, fearing disenchantment, like Wordsworth when he wrote his "Yarrow unvisited." To us it has always been the enchanted ground of the "Recreations," and notably of "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket;" and if he has idealized it into the impressions of distinct reality, it says the more for his genius. We associate young Wilson with its manse, its moorlands, and its village street, as we associate Gilbert White with the Forest of Woolmer and the Hanger of Selborne. Half Highland, half Lowland, we knew it as a very paradise for the ornithologist or the bird-nesting boy; with birds of each ordinary Scottish species—from falcon, buzzard, and hen-harriers hunting over the moors and mosses among their muir-fowl and their snipe, to the mavis and the merles in the manse garden, and the sparrows that swarmed up everywhere in clouds when a stone was flung into thatch or ivy. It was there that "poor wee Kit" was lost on that memorable morning when he had started at "skreigh of dawn" to draw a night-line from the Black Loch; when

"a mist overtook him on the moor on his homeward way, with an eel as long as himself hanging over his shoulder, and held him prisoner for many hours within its shifting walls, frail indeed, and opposing no resistance to the hand, yet impenetrable to the feet of fear as the stone dungeon's thralldom." How we sympathize with the shivering urchin, as, when he sat down to cry, "the small brown moorland bird, dry as a fossil, hopped out of his heather-hole and cheerfully cheeped comfort!" And how characteristic is the small castaway's delight when, forgetting his sad plight in excitement over the wonder, he sees three tiny peasewep shuffle past him—nestlings which have just emerged from the shell!

It was from that parish of the Mearns that the well-grown lad started on the angler's and shooter's progress. Even those who have little sympathy with field-sports, must surely confess that we should have lost much had Christopher been no sportsman. Never is his pen more eloquent, or his imagination more fervent, than when he is casting a fly in the rocky pools, or striding, Manton in hand, over the moors. How animated and animating are his descriptions of the hooked monster of the stream, or the stealthy crawl on the red deer; of the "brattle along the brae," when the "lang dogs" were laid upon the witch in the maukin's fur that had her seat under the peat-dike of the cotter's kail-yard! For, as a sportsman, Christopher was most catholic in his tastes—too much so, indeed, according to more humanitarian modern notions; for loving to look upon a fair battle whether between man and man or beast and beast, he delighted in a main of cocks as much as Lord Derby or his Grace of Norfolk, or many another peer or statesman of the times. For ourself, we have formed personal friendships with many cats, and nowadays we should as soon hound a bulldog on a baby, as look on while a cat was being worried by the terriers. Yet if we dared, we should like to quote that thrilling and dramatic interlude, awakening recollections of thoughtless rather than cruel boyhood, where Glowrer and Tearer, after a furious hunt, bring the "she-devil incarnate, all ablaze and abristle," to bay at the hedge-root. Other days, other times of life, and other ways of thinking; and we do not quote it. Rather let us take Christopher in somewhat gentler mood, though still bent on murder; when he has caught sight of the solitary heron, solemnly, yet swiftly, swallowing an eel.

Be propitious, O ye Fates! and never—never—shall he again fold his wings on the edge of his gaping nest, on the trees that overtop the only tower left of the old castle. Another eel, and we too can crawl silent as the sinuous serpent. Flash! Bang! over he goes dead—no, not dead,—but how unlike that unavailing flapping, as head-over-heels he goes spinning over the tarn, to the serene unsettling of himself from sod or stone, when, his hunger sated, and his craw filled with fish for his far-off brood, he used to lift his blue bulk into the air, and with long depending legs, at first floated away like a wearied thing, but soon, as his wings felt the current of air homewards flowing, urged swifter and swifter his easy course—laggard and lazy no more—leaving leagues behind him, ere you had shifted your motion in watching his cloudlike career, soon invisible among the woods!

It is poetry as usual, and sound natural history as well; and frames a picture, moreover, of earth, air, and water, of which the fate of the heron was merely the suggestion, as his life and death were the moving incidents. Christopher, we believe, was a very fair shot, and fond of shooting in a moderate way. We doubt not that in his time he had knocked over most Scottish game, from the shy red deer to the shier whaup. And being merely moderately fond of shooting, his shooting sketches are often exquisite. For he followed the sport in contemplative mood; and so he dresses its episodes in the language of unstudied eloquence, and his shooting articles abound in spirited digressions that land us quite as often as not in the realms of art, criticism, or philosophy. But fishing was a passion with him, and so when he gets upon that subject, he confines himself more strictly to the absorbing pursuit. Never, of course, does he show himself more animated; but even when idealizing he concentrates his energy on spirited descriptions of the actual sport. "But the salmon has grown sulky, and must be made to spring to the plunging-stone. There, suddenly, instinct with new passion, she shoots out of the foam like a bar of silver bullion. . . . Give her the butt—give her the butt—or she is gone forever with the thunder into ten fathoms deep!"—and so on. Admirable the descriptions are; but necessarily a little of them goes a long way; and Christopher, who knew that, is chary of them, considering his enthusiasm as an angler. But his thorough-going style of fishing being eminently characteristic of his ardent yet earnest nature, we may recall what the Shepherd has to say of it in the "Noctes."

His daughter assures us that the description is exact.

Oh! but you should have seen him in Loch Owe, or the Spey. In he used to gang, out, out, and ever sae far out frae the pint o' a promontory, sinkin aye furdur and furdur doun, first to the waistband o' his breeks, then up to the middle button o' his waistcoat, then to the verra breast, then to the oxters, then to the neck, and then to the very chin o' him, sae that you wunnered how he could fling the flee, till last o' a' he would plump richt out o' sight, till the Highlander on Ben Cruachan thoct him drooned; but he wasna born to be drooned—no he, indeed—sae he taks to the soomin; and strikes awa wi' ae arm, like yoursel, sir—for the tither had haud o' the rod—and, could ye believ't, though its as true as Scriptur', fishing a' the time, that no a moment o' the cloudy day might be lost.

From the sportsman we pass naturally to the ornithologist; and in Wilson, as in all worshippers of nature, the one taste and the other were indissolubly blended. An exceedingly delightful series of essays are those entitled, "Christopher in his Aviary." If he knew less of birds scientifically than his brother the eminent naturalist, we venture to say that he had lived far more in the intimacy of those which make the delight of wild parishes like the Mearns. In his "Aviary" in rambling fashion he passes all in review,—now rising to sublimity of style among the rugged precipices where the eagles have made their eyries from time immemorial; now celebrating the songsters of the fields and woodlands in strains almost as sweet as their own. Now he leads us away to the solitudes of the moor, to listen to the whistle of the curlew and the cry of the lapwing; now he invites us to sedgy swamp and lonely tarn, the haunts of the coot and the water-hen; and to the mosses, where the wild duck and teal are rearing their broods of flappers; and anon we stroll out with him in the stillness of the gloaming, when the night owl on downy wing is gliding ghost-like from rick-yard to hedgerow, hunting for the mice and small birds that are "to pacify a set of hissing and snappish and shapeless powder-puffs in the loophole of a barn." For each and all, from "the golden eagles of Glenfalloch—the storm-wheelers and the cloud-cleavers," down to the tiny wren, he has some word of grateful praise and admiration; and be it observed that, translating the eulogies into language of his own, he has something quaintly original to say about each. But he reserves his simplest and most affec-

tionate tenderness for the birds, which, if they are not exceptionally, are especially Scotch; for those that have chiefly inspired the peasant muse, as unconsciously to him they have charmed away the cares of many a cottager; for the blackbird and the thrush, the lark and the "grey lintie."

Higher and higher than ever rose the tower of Belus, uplifted by ecstasy, soars the Lark, the lyrical poet of the sky. Listen, listen! and the more remote the bird the louder seems his hymn in heaven. He seems, in such altitude, to have left the earth forever, and to have forgotten his lowly nest. The primroses and the daisies, and all the sweet hill-flowers, must be remembered in that lofty region of light. But just as the Lark is lost—he and his song together—as if his orisons had been accepted—both are seen and heard fondly wavering earthwards, and in a little while he is walking with his graceful crest contented along the furrows of the braided corn, or on the clover lea that in man's memory has not felt the ploughshare; or after a pause, in which he seems dallying with a homesick passion, drooping down like one dead, beside his mate in her shallow nest.

What a variety of articles—for although similar they are never monotonous—Wilson has written specially on scenery! Of the Continent he knew nothing: for England,—always excepting the semi-Scottish Lake country to which he clung through life with undivided affection,—he cared little. But with his quick appreciation, with his rare receptiveness to each impression of the sublime and beautiful in their ever-changing forms, he had lived and dreamed in the Highlands and among the Lakes, till, as he says himself in playful exaggeration, he had come to know each nook of them only too well. In "Streams" and "Cottages;" in a series of monologues on the moors, the lakes, the seasons; in many a bright passage in the "Noctes" as well,—he has expatiated on his favorite themes. But divorcing passages from their contexts would generally do him some injustice, as if we were to tear a strip, by way of specimen, out of a landscape by Claude or Turner. And yet some slight selections we must make, were it only that our notice of him may be fairly comprehensive. Shall we take him when he hesitates as to awarding the palm of beauty among his four favorite lakes—Awe and Lomond, Windermere and Killarney? Hardly; for there we should have to make extracts extending over many pages of "Maga," beginning with the characteristic and rapturous apostrophe to Loch

Awe, "mountain-crowned, cliff-guarded, isle-zoned, grave-girdled, wide-winding and far-stretching, with thy many bayed banks and braes of brush-wood, fern, broom, and heather, rejoicing in their huts and shielings." Rather let us single out a more compact fragment, most beautifully suggestive, when out with his setters on the moors on the 12th, he is doubting towards what airt he shall turn his face.

Over yonder cliffs shall we ascend, and descend into Glen Creran, where the stony regions that the ptarmigan loves melt away into miles of the grouse heather, which, ere we near the salmon-haunted Loch so beautiful, loses itself in woods that mellow all the heights of Glen Ure and Fasnacloigh with sylvan shades, wherein the cushat coos, and the roe glides through the secret covert? Or shall we away up by Kinloch-Etive, and Melnatorran, and Mealgayre, into the Solitude of Streams, that from all their lofty sources down to the far-distant Loch have never yet brooked, nor will they ever brook, the bondage of bridges, save of some huge stone flung across some chasm, or trunk of a tree—none but trunks of trees there, and all dead for centuries—that had sunk down where it grew, and spanned the flood that eddies round it with a louder music? Wild region! yet not barren; for there are cattle on a thousand hills, that, wild as the very red-deer, toss their heads as they snuff the feet of rarest stranger, and form round him in a half-alarmed and half-threatening crescent. There flocks of goats—outliers from Dalness—may be seen as if following one another on the very air, along the lichen-stained cliffs that frown down unfathomed abysses—and there is frequent heard the whirring of the gorcock's wing, and his gobble gathering together his brood, scattered by the lightning that in its season volleys through the silence, else far deeper than that of death;—for the silence of death—that is, of a churchyard filled with tombs—is nothing to the austerity of the noiselessness that prevails under the shadow of Unimore and Attchorachan, with their cliffs on which the storms have engraven strange hieroglyphical inscriptions, etc.

Or going southwards with him across the Border, hear him expatiating upon the lakes as distinguished from the lochs.

Every Lake hath its promontories, that, every step you walk, every stroke you row, undergo miraculous metamorphoses, accordant to the "change that comes o'er the spirit of your dream," as your imagination glances again over the transfigured mountains. Each Lake hath its Bays of Bliss, where might ride at her moorings, made of the stalks of water-lilies, the Fairy Bark of a spiritual life. Each Lake hath its hanging terraces of immortal green, that along her shores run glimmering far down beneath the superficial sunshine,

when the Poet in his becalmed canoe among the lustre could fondly swear by all that is most beautiful on earth, in air, and in water, that these Three are One, blended as they are by the interfusing spirit of heavenly peace. Each Lake hath its enchantments, too, belonging to this our mortal, our human world,—the dwelling-places, beautiful to see, of virtuous poverty, in contentment exceeding rich—whose low roofs are reached by roses spontaneously springing from the same soil that yields to strenuous labor the sustenance of a simple life. Each Lake hath its Halls, as well as its huts,—solemn now, and almost melancholy, among the changes that for centuries have been imperceptibly stealing upon the abodes of prosperous men—but merry of yore, at all seasons of the year, as groves in spring.

He delighted in wanderings through the wilds of the Highlands; but it was in that enchanted land of the Lakes that he loved to live: and the poet, pedestrian, and student could hardly have found a home that suited his tastes more happily than Ellerray. His writings abound in fond allusions to the rambling, mossy-roofed cottage De Quincey has photographed for us, and which was subsequently replaced on similar architectural lines by a more pretentious but scarcely less picturesque residence. Wilson adored fine timber as devoutly as any worshipper of dryads and hamadryads; but it was the sycamore, the tree of the lakes, to which his affections turned most fondly, and, above all, to the mighty sycamore that cast its broad shadows over Ellerray. "Never in this well-wooded world, not even in the days of the Druids, could there have been such another tree. It would be easier to suppose two Shakespeares. . . . Oh sweetest and shadiest of all sycamores, we love thee beyond all other trees!"

It may appear somewhat paradoxical, but from the passionate admirer of nature to the critic, the transition seems to be as easy and natural as from the keen sportsman to the naturalist. For passionate as his admiration was, it was tempered by judgment and regulated by philosophical principles; and if his landscape-painting is as remarkable for vigor as for versatility, it is because quickness of perception was an instinct with him, and because he intuitively analyzed his emotions and their sources. He was a born critic if ever man was; and it is by his criticisms, in the broadest meaning of the word, that he will be best remembered. He read and interpreted the changing expressions on the face of nature with an intuitive and sympathetic discrimination all his own.

But as nature comes very near to perfection in her several styles, his criticisms run on an ascending scale of admiration from chastened praise to rapturous eulogy. With the works of his fellow-men it was different. Never blinded, although he might be dazzled, by the blaze of their genius, he saw the blemishes in a Shakespeare though he almost failed to find any in a Homer. With more ordinary mortals he became the discriminating judge, always, we are sure, desirous of being dispassionate, yet not unfrequently swayed by his prejudices or convictions. For example, in common with Lockhart and the rest of the Blackwood brotherhood, he detested what they had dubbed contumeliously "the Cockney school." He often dealt hard measure to such able writers as Hunt and Hazlitt, though, when he was impressed by some clever piece of work, he would pay it a handsome tribute. Nay, where he fancied he detected the cloven foot of "the Cockney," he would occasionally indite a stinging article on some man whom he really loved and respected. We have before us now a letter in which Lockhart complains bitterly to Blackwood of the professor's treatment of Sir Humphry Davy's "*Salmonia*." The fact being that in expatiating on the salmon and eagles of Loch Maree, the philosopher *did* write exceedingly like a Cockney,—to say nothing of such smaller sins, as the absurd modicum of claret he served out to three hearty sportsmen who were taking their pleasure in the Highlands in all weathers. But if Wilson could be severe, he was warmly appreciative as well, as may be seen by a reference to his writings generally. And, as we have said, no literary veteran was ever more judiciously encouraging to young aspirants of talent with the faults of their inexperience. We have read sundry charming private letters written under such circumstances. Before proceeding frankly to indicate the blemishes, he invariably gives generous admiration to the beauties. As the critical consulting adviser of the editor he was admirable in that respect; and we may refer in especial to a letter in which he rejects a poetical effusion of his friend Dr. Moir, which is quoted in his daughter Mrs. Gordon's "*Memoir*." After many well-deserved compliments, he assigns his reasons categorically; and whether answerable or not, they are, at all events, so cogent as amply to justify the writer's decision to the intelligence of even a mortified contributor. By the way, there is an incidental passage in the

letter which is interesting, as showing the writer's modest appreciation of his own merits as a poet. He says, "You have not, it is true, written any one great work, and perhaps, like myself, you never will." Not the least pointed of Wilson's critical judgments are to be found scattered incidentally through the dialogues in the "Noctes." But it is undoubtedly in his finished articles on the poets that he shines in his fullest lustre. We agree with him that he never himself wrote a great poem. We think, as we shall have an opportunity of arguing later, that in the actual practice of the poetical art, he fell far short of the highest standard. Nevertheless he was undoubtedly a great poet in imaginative power, in the sensibilities, and in the emotions. He shows it in his sympathetic strength of his analysis—in the quick reception and harmonious expansion of some beautiful idea—in his fervent elucidation of suggestive passages where he interprets the inner mind of the poet; as in the readiness with which he strips the commonplace of a rhapsodical disguise, and the originality with which he disputes received opinions. Let us take an extract from the article on Tennyson, in which he expresses admirably the true principles and influences of the loftiest poetry:—

It is not at all necessary that we should understand fine poetry to feel and enjoy it, any more than fine music. That is to say, some sorts of fine poetry—the shadowy and the spiritual; where something glides before us ghost-like, "now in glimmer and now in gloom," and then away into some still place of trees and tombs. Yet the poet who composes it must weigh the force of every feeling word—in a balance true to a hair, forever vibrating, and obedient to the touch of down or dew-drop. Think not that such process interrupts inspiration; it sustains and feeds it: for it becomes a habit of the heart and the soul in all their musings and meditations; and thus is the language of poetry, though human, heavenly speech. In reading it, we see new revelations on each rehearsal—all of them true, though haply different; and what we at first thought a hymn, we may at last feel to be an elegy—a breathing, not about the quick, but the dead.

We should remember that striking passage in reading his article upon Coleridge, which, in its delicate display of the sensitive critical faculty, we are disposed to place even before the article on Burns, although the author of "The Cottar's Saturday Night" appealed so strongly to the Scottish sympathies of Wilson. Ere we read Wilson we had admired "Christabel;" yet we hardly loved where we failed

to understand. But Wilson seems to penetrate the mysticism of the author, to dream his dreams and to realize his fancies: he suggests unsuspected difficulties only to explain them; and if his interpretations should have missed the meaning of the other poet, at all events they recommend themselves forcibly to our imagination. The language of the criticism is as fervent as it is finished. The admiration is unstinted, though thoroughly well reasoned; and the metaphors with which he illustrates the beauty of the poem, although fantastic, are not extravagant.

Christabel resembles no other poem, except inasmuch as it is a poem. Here was a new species of poetry, and the specimen was felt to be perfect. It was as if some bright consummate flower had been added to the families of the field—discovered growing by itself—with its own peculiar balm and its own peculiar bloom,—mournful as moonlight—delicate as the dawn—yet strong as day,—and in its silken folds, by its own beauty, preserved unwithered in all weathers.

What is its meaning? It is a mystery, which even Coleridge himself could not have explained; for who can explain a mood of superstition? And yet there is an impression of intense realism, which awakens the true emotions of love and fear for the unsuspecting virgin imperilled by her charity. "What the dread and what the danger you know not, but that they are not from the common things of this world." The strain on the highly wrought feelings becomes more tense, as Wilson points out, with the casual touches which seem insignificant in themselves, how the stranger, gliding in the moonlight from the wood, is guided to the chamber of her innocent guide. The broken accents of Geraldine are ambiguous: the stumble on the threshold; the moaning of the mastiff; the flicker of the flame from the dying embers in the hall; the sinking under the sacred emblem of the silver lamp that is "fastened to an angel's feet,"—those and other signs that become more ominous in conjunction, "all sink down our hearts for the sake of the sinless Christabel,"—all seem to prepare us for some coming shock—"a horror hinted, yet not revealed." So with the analysis of the "Ancient Mariner," in which Wilson again defends the daring treatment of the supernatural in the highest order of imaginative poetry. It is all a question of the genius of the poet; the verse must either be immortal, or a miserable failure. For the contrast between a failure and a triumph, let us refer our

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readers to Wilson's remarks on Tupper's foolhardy attempt to finish Coleridge's incomparable fragment. *A propos* to the fantastic structure of the "Ancient Mariner," it is explained that the poet's dream thrown into poetry, although it be made up of the wild and wonderful, may be nevertheless as consistent with itself as the grandest effort of speculative thought. The ordinary rules of evidence are set aside; no limits are assigned to the possibilities of nature; and yet the conceptions may be not unnatural. "Unnatural!" Nothing is unnatural that stirs our heartstrings — her voice it is (nature's voice), if from some depth within us steals a response. Wilson shows, with rare vigor of intelligence, how Coleridge has condensed in comparatively few words the very essence of torment; how he wrought out his true "Tragedy of Remorse — and also of Repentance." "But Remorse and Repentance, what are they to Doom? They neither change nor avert — and seeing themselves both baffled, again begin to ban and curse, till there is a conversion; and out of perfect contrition arise, even in nature's extremest misery, resignation and peace."

If we are right in our estimate of Wilson's judgments of poetry, we need hardly waste words on his brilliant essay on Burns. We must be content to single out a couple of passages; one of which gives the key to the poet's peculiar strength, as the other to the fascination he has exercised over his countrymen. In the first, Wilson argues that our greatest poets have always gone to the people for their most effective or most moving pictures. Scott, and Shakespeare, and Wordsworth "have descended from aerial heights into the humblest dwellings." But

• Burns was born, bred, lived, and died in that condition of this mortal life to which they paid but visits; his heart lay wholly there; and that heart, filled as it was with all the best human feelings, and sometimes with thoughts divine, had no fear about entering into places which timid moralists might have thought forbidden and unhallowed ground, but which he, wiser far, knew to be inhabited by creatures of conscience, bound there often in thick darkness by the inscrutable decrees of God.

As for the infinite charm of his poetry for the poor, Wilson seems also to have found the secret of that. Burns lamented their sorrows, as he touched their sores with a tender hand; but in idealizing the bright side of their existence, he lightened their hours of care and toil with the merry

spirit of the old ballad poetry. For Labor is often inclined to mirthful mood, nor is "Care always his black companion." And we fancy we hear Wilson speaking of his friend the Ettrick Shepherd, as well as of the Shepherd's great master and model, when he writes: —

From the first hour, and indeed long before it, that he composed his rudest verse, often had he sung aloud "old songs that are the music of the heart;" and some day or other to be able himself to breathe such strains, had been his dearest, his highest ambition. His "genius and his moral frame" were thus imbued into his spirit of our old traditional ballad poetry; and as soon as all his manifold passions were ripe, and his whole glorious being in full maturity, the voice of song was on all occasions of tenderest and deepest human interest, the voice of his daily, his nightly speech. He wooed each maiden in song that will, as long as our Doric dialect is breathed by love in beauty's ears, be murmured close to the cheek of Innocence trembling in the arms of Passion.

If the articles on Coleridge and Burns are exceptionally admirable, those on Tennyson and Macaulay show his generous appreciation of rising genius; though the laureate resented his strictures in lines that have been thought worth reprinting in later editions, if they do little credit to the writer in any way. As to the warm praise of the "Lays of Ancient Rome," we should scarcely care to recall the fact that Macaulay was one of the most formidable champions of the Whigs, were it not that Wilson has been most unreasonably reproached with injustice to political opponents, and notoriously to the contributors to the *Edinburgh*. But it is in the series of essays on "Homer and his Translators," which almost occupy an entire volume of his works, that Wilson displays all the resources of his critical strength, as they awaken all the emotions of his poetical sympathies. With the careful comparison of the merits of the best of the translators — with the scrupulous weighing of epithets, and the searching estimate of the paraphrases — with the elucidation of the spirit of the bard, and the analysis of the original Greek text, — the capabilities of the judge were submitted to a severer test than those of the authors he summons before them. It seems rash in the extreme to court such an ordeal; but we think candor will confess that he comes out of it triumphantly. There is a touch of affectation in one of the opening sentences, where he says, "We are no great Greek scholars, but we can force our way *vi et armis* through the

Iliad." His scholarship was not only sound, but fastidiously preceptive, as he proceeds straightway to prove. The preliminary remark on the theory of a plurality of Homers, is to the point, and conclusive. "Nature is not so prodigal of her great poets. . . . Who ever heard of two Miltons — of two Shakespeares? That there should have been even one of each is a mystery, when we look at what are called men." His conceptions of Homer and the Homeric characters are singularly interesting; while, by exciting us to the exercise of our own reflective faculties, they raise us to an attitude of intelligent enjoyment, as they remind us of the manners of the Homeric age. Homer flourished in the days of a magnificent barbarism, when kings feasted like gluttons, and the godlike son of Thetis could exult savagely over the corpse of the fallen champion of Troy. Then, "was Homer savage or civilized"? Both. So was Achilles. "Conceived by a goddess, and begotten by a hero, that half-celestial child sat at the knees of a formidable Gamaliel — Chiron the Centaur. Grown up to perfect stature, his was the Beauty of the Passions — Apollo's self in his loveliness, — not a more majestic minister of death." It has often occurred to readers of the Iliad, to ask if the mighty Achilles was not really a coward. What credit to him, if he, knowing himself invulnerable, achieves feats impossible to mortal men, and revels safely in slaughter? But it is impossible that the sublime Homer should have made a hero of a truculent coward; and Wilson reconciles apparent inconsistencies, and forcibly disposing of the difficulty, glorifies the chivalry of Achilles.

From whom would he have fled? Not from Mars and Bellona. One qualm of fear would have destroyed that transcendent ideal of unconquerable will. But he was invulnerable. Would that in our boyhood we had never been confounded by that lie! He was, of all the heroes that fought before Troy, the sole Doom'd Man, yet never knew he fear within the perpetual shadows of death.

And the idea that must have inspired Homer's creation, is confirmed by the address of the dying Hector to his slayer: "There is no savage spirit of revenge in the prophecy that expires on his lips; it is almost a passionless prediction of death to one who feared not death — an enunciation of the will of Heaven about to be executed by a god. . . . And what moral sublimity in the answer of 'the dreadless angel'!"

Die Thou the first! when Jove and Heaven ordain —

I follow thee, he said, and stripp'd the slain.

So, too, we have intelligible explanations of the apparent weaknesses of the noble Hector; and ample justice is done to the overbearing "king of men" in the grand reconciliation scene with his once sullen enemy. Especially fine and equally characteristic are the glosses on these immortal episodes, in which the Trojan hero consoles the weeping Andromache; where the deputation of the Grecian league is welcomed in the tent of Achilles; and where the bands of the wolf-like Myrmidons are mustering for the fight, when Patroclus is to be sent to the shades, while wearing the arms of Achilles. Once again we call attention to the comparisons of the translations; and a careful study of these is invaluable as an exercise in practical criticism. Whether Wilson confirm you in your personal opinions, or differ from them, his suggested reasons are sure to carry weight, if they do not bring absolute conviction.

We must resist the temptation to linger over his "Homer;" but after all, were we to devote a score of pages to it, we could only amplify what we have indicated as its beauties. And so we pass on to the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," in which he has at once created a central character with a wonderful individuality, and displayed the best of his versatile powers as an inimitable essayist. Setting genius, talent, cleverness — which you will — aside, what strikes us as the most conspicuous feature in the "Noctes" is the seduction of the intellectual conviviality. Their *locale* was most appropriately laid in the dining-room of one of Christopher's mansions, or in the blue parlor at Ambrose's in moments of unrestrained social enjoyment. Supposed to be written or reported, at midnight, there is not the faintest odor of the lamp about them. As little does the facility of the free-and-easy style leave any impression of negligence or superficiality. Wilson threw off his best articles in sustained bursts of inspired effort, from a free fancy with a running pen. His daughter in her "Memoir," as Gillies in his "Recollections of a Veteran," enlightens us as to the professor's method of writing. His literary feats were even more remarkable than those of his *collaborateur*, Lockhart. Gillies says: "Mr. Wilson had a rapidity of executive power, such as I have never seen equalled before or since. . . . But as he would do nothing but when he liked, and how he

liked, his productions, whether serious or comic, might all be regarded as mere *jeux d'esprit* and matters of amusement." Mrs. Gordon goes into greater detail. Her father often delayed indispensable work till each second became of consequence. "When regularly in for an article for *Blackwood* his whole strength was put forth, and it may be said he struck into life what he had to do at a blow." He despatched breakfast, shut himself up in his study, with express orders that nobody was to disturb him, "and he never stirred from his writing-table until perhaps the greater part of a 'Noctes' was written." Later in life the intervals of indolence became longer, and we have Lockhart in many private notes complaining to Blackwood that the professor had withdrawn to Ellerray, and would show no sign of animation. And such a method of work was only possible to a man of powerful *physique*, so long as his health was unimpaired, with vast stores of miscellaneous reading, and a memory equally tenacious and reliable. Dumas prides himself, in the preface to one of his books, on dashing them off in similar fashion. He attributes the facility of his composition to the accuracy of knowledge which dispenses him from stopping to ransack authorities. He demonstrates his exactness in the next two pages by three gross historical blunders. But Wilson never trusted to his brilliancy to carry off careless *lapsus* of the kind; he may possibly have turned a difficulty on occasion, but we seldom or never catch him tripping. Nor can there be a question that for articles in the manner of the "Noctes" that is the only effective style of composition, although it may be within the powers of very few. The sequence of thought flows forward unbroken; the happy repartee of animated dialogue is sustained; the bright flashes of the fancy are never dimmed in the "dull oblivion" that naturally creeps upon the writer as he diverts his thoughts to the drudgery of reference. We have spoken of Wilson creating a central individuality, and there, of course, we allude to his Shepherd. But his own fancy portrait as Christopher North was in material respects far more imaginative; and in nothing so much as in Kit's manner of working. Kit of the "Noctes" carries his Rabelaisian habits of conviviality into the sanctum, where he dashes off his lucubrations. He loved to scandalize the Cockneys he disliked; and so he talks of port and decanters of Madeira; of light dinners, served in sundry courses; and of

caulkers of Glenlivet, by which he brightened his periods with a frequent turning up of the little finger. In reality he was as abstemious as an anchorite when he went into harness for one of his literary spurts:—

Whatever he had to write, even though a day or two were to keep him close at work, he never interrupted his pen, saving to take his night's rest, and a late dinner served to him in his study. The hour for that meal was, on these occasions, nine o'clock; his dinner then consisted invariably of a boiled fowl, potatoes, and a glass of water; he allowed himself no wine. After dinner he resumed his pen till midnight.

And so the pages of manuscript were piled at his elbow, to be transferred, when they became top-heavy, to the carpet; and so the "Noctes," almost without exception, were spun, as quickly, as lightly, and as strong as the gossamer web of the witch in "Thalaba."

It was a happy idea, if not an original one, that gathered a group of familiar friends around the well-spread supper-table. The intellectual powers brighten towards the small hours, and genius is never in greater force than when reposing itself in forms of desultory exertion after the labors of a well-spent day. Nor can we underrate the mental exhilaration that comes of the reasonable enjoyment of the wine-cup. In an age when serious after-dinner drinking had hardly gone out, the imaginary brethren of the "Noctes" were neither sots nor toppers. They were strong men who carried their liquor discreetly; and they took the precaution of laying a most substantial foundation. They have been taxed with gluttony, and we are bound to admit that there is a superabundance of heavy eating in the articles. But as the Shepherd observed, in rebutting that charge, they were men of good—nay, of great—appetites. And it must be admitted that there was a sense of fitness in attributing to them exceptional digestive powers, since vigorous bodies imply vigorous minds. But those heavy suppers were as much a dream as the preliminary feast of the facetious Barmecide. We know that they neither generated dulness nor nightmares. The sparkles of wit came the faster and the brighter for repeated application to the round and the how-towdies; nor did pathos ever decline into maudlin sentimentality, though the "jug" made revolutions as regular as the moon round the Calton Hill. There is a sense of fitness in that, because the healthy interlocutors

combined the constitution of countrymen with the intelligence of students of thought and genius. Long days on the banks of the river, on the moors, or on the hills, had led to profitable interludes of earnest self-communion, besides bracing them for the literary efforts by which they hoped to live in the future. And so they brought the freshness breathed from the Peeblesshire hills and the braes of Dalnacardoch to disquisitions philosophical and political, and to rambles among the book-sellers of the Row.

The scheme invited the treatment of an infinity of subjects, and permitted the abruptest and most piquant transitions. North has been expatiating somewhat seriously upon sermons, and, apparently from sheer force of associations with recollections of old ladies with their nosegays of odoriferous herbs, his hearers begin to feel somnolent; or the English opium-eater has been moralizing on speculative metaphysics, and the monologue grows monotonous. What more natural, than that, when the orator "cuts the thread of his discourse with a drink," one of the party should spring on the opportunity and open cry on another topic? The hint suffices, all chime in, and there is no jealousy. From communing with Bacon or Dugald Stewart, from dissecting the demonology of the great magician, or discussing the droning pedlar of Wordsworth—and "The Excursion" is but a sermon in poetical form—we go wading waist-deep with the Shepherd in the pools of Innerleithen, or stand watching a burst of the greyhounds on the slopes that look down upon Altrive Lake. In the compass of one night of literally fast living we are carried round the whole circle of arts, science, politics, field-sports, the journalism of to-day and the literature of all the ages. It has been said that the "Noctes" are too provincial, — and that, no doubt, is a blemish, as is their frequently diverging at length into matters of ephemeral interest. So far as that goes, we must remember that they were written month by month, and be very grateful to take them as we find them. For surely any editor would have been ill advised who allowed himself free license of hacking and mangling. But we distinctly deny that they are too local, which is a very different thing from being provincial. They are local inasmuch as they are essentially national; and Christopher never shows his sublimity or his sensibility so absolutely as when he is most entirely Scottish. So it came about that by the most

felicitous of his many happy thoughts he glorified the shepherd of Ettrick as their central luminary. The Shepherd of the "Noctes" is so far true to his original, that Hogg's checkered career was really a romance; while some of his actual achievements were so marvellous that nothing he might say or do could much surprise us. The creature of his impulses, and entirely self-taught, he had done far more than compose his beautiful lyrics; for he had written, as we have said, a weekly paper, and the venture for a time had fairly succeeded. It is true that we are startled by North's proposal—made, by the way, somewhere about midnight—that he should review the fashionable novels. "I read nane," he had remarked on another occasion. But generally in practice, as in speech, he is kept within the limits of the conceivable. He does not profess to have mastered the classics; as he naively observes, when North is speaking of Turgot and Galileo, he knows nothing about Turkey or Galilee, or such-like outlandish countries. But in his own Scotland of the Borders he is thoroughly at home, as he ranges the realms of imagination, a chartered libertine. There is nothing that can touch the sympathies of a roughly cultivated genius which is undreamed of in his poetical philosophy. For the Shepherd is always the poet, and the alchemist transmuting the baser metals into silver and gold; and if he is sometimes coarse, he is never vulgar. We can give no better idea of the eloquence of the "Noctes" than by noting some of the flowers and the diamonds that drop from his mouth; while his casual self-revelations are as true to the life as any of the confessions in his frank autobiography. As to these last, we come on a characteristic specimen on the very threshold of Professor Ferrier's edition. "Whence," asks North, "are all your poetic visions, James?"

Shepherd. Genius, — Genius, my dear sir. . . . O happy days that I have lain on the green hillside, with my plaid around me, best mantle of inspiration, my faithful Hector sitting like a very Christian by my side, glowing far aff into the glens after the sheep, or ablinks lifting up his ee to the gied hovering close aneath the marbled roof of clouds, — bonny St. Mary's Loch lying like a smile below, and a softened sun, scarcely warmer than the moon hersel, adorning without dazzling the day, over the heavens and the earth, — a beuk o' auld ballants, as yellow as the cowslips, in my hand or my bosom, and maybe, sir, my ink-horn dangling at a buttonhole, a bit stump o' pen, nae bigger than an auld wife's pipe, in my

mouth—and a piece o' paper, torn out o' the hinder end of a volume, crunking on my knee; on such a couch, Mr. North, hath your Shepherd seen visions and dreamed dreams; but his een were never steeked; and I continued aye to see and to hear a' outward things, although scarcely conscious at the time o' their real nature, so bright, wavering, and unsure-like was the haill livin world, frae my lair on the knowe beside the clear spring, to the distant weather- gleam.

The Shepherd wrote poetry and tales, as we know—he saw visions and he dreamed dreams; but we do not believe he ever made sketches in the flesh, whatever he may have done in the spirit. Here, however, we have a brilliant companion study in which the imaginative resembles although it contrasts the actual:—

I'm just as original in paintin' as in poetry, and follow nae master! I'm partial to close scenes—a bit neuk, wi' a big mossy stane, aiblins a birch tree, a burnie maist dried up, a' but ae deep pool into which slides a thread o' water down a rock—a shepherd readin,—nae ither leevin thing—for the flock are ayont the knowes—and up among the green hills. . . . I've dune a moor—gin you saw't you would doubt the earth being roun', there's sic an extent o' flat—and then, though there's nae mountain-taps, you feel you're on table-land. I contrive that by means o' the cluds. You never beheld stronger bent—some o' the stalks thick as your arm—and places wi' naething but stanes. . . . Time—evening, or rather late on in the afternoon, when Nature shows a solemn—maist an awfu' stillness—and solitude, as I hae aften thoct, is deeper than at midnight.

And we may remark in passing on the cleverness with which the Shepherd's talk is managed. It abounds in most expressive Scotticisms, and no language is richer in epithets tersely expressive; but it is the Doric and classical Scotch, with little of local vulgarity. Listen to the Shepherd with his effusive patriotism, vindicating the grandeur of one of his Highland thunderstorms against the terrors of a tropical tornado. We are transported into the thickest of the war of the elements, and yet the vivid picture comes as a stimulating relief to the horrors of the strained suspense and the silent gloom which had heralded it.

Hear it spangin—hap, step, and loup—frae Cruachan to Ben Nevis! The red-deer—you micht think them a' dead—and that their antlers were rotten bronches—sae stane-like do they couch atween the claps—without ae rustle in the heather. Black is the sky as pitch—but every here and there, shootin up

through the purple gloom,—for when the lichtnin darts out its fiery serpents it is purple,—lo! bricht pillars and pinnacles illuminated in the growlin darkness, and then gone in a moment in all their glory, as the day-nicht descends denser doun upon the heart o' the glens, and you only hear the mountain-tap; for wha can see the thousand-year-auld cairn up-by yonder, when a' the haill heaven is ae coal-cloud—takin fire every noo and then as if it were a furnace?—and then indeed by that flash may you see the cairn like a giant's ghost. Up goes the sable veil—for an eddy has been churning the red river into spray, and noo is a whirlwind—and at that upriving see ye not a hundred snaw-white torrents tumbling frae the tarns, and every cliff rejoicin in its new-born cataract? . . . Yet the cloud-army comes on in the dead-march—and this is the muffled drum. Na—that flash gaed through my head, and I fear I'm stricken blind! Rattle—rattle—rattle—as if great granite stanes were shot out o' the sky doun an invisible airn-roof, and plungin sullenly intil the sea. The eagles daurna scream—but that demon the raven, croaks—croaks—croaks,—is it out o' the earth, or out o' the air, cave, or cloud? My being is cowed in the intense solitude.

Yet the Shepherd, when he falls into the mood, can transport himself to the countries of the tornadoes. Witness the piece of humorous fooling in the last of the "Noctes," when he avows a vague belief in the "mettaseekozies," and recounts his sensations and experiences as a lion in a previous state of existence. Power of description and pathos are intermingled with his quaint drollery; and there might be worse material for a fantastical epic of the brute-world, in the imitable manner of Reinicke Fuchs. But we are always attracted back irresistibly to Scotland—to some of those touching pictures of humble Scottish life, which Wilson has less successfully expanded in his fictions. Take the recollections of the poet's childhood, with the tranquil scenes of simple family life in many a lowly cottage in a primitive neighborhood.

Methinks I see my father and my mother, my brothers and sisters! We are a' sittin thegither—the grown up—the little and the less—the peat fire wi' an ash-root in't, is bright and vaporless as a new-risin star'that ye come suddenly in sicht o', and think it so near that ye could maist grup it wi' your outstretched haun. What voices are these I hear?—the well-known, beloved tones of lips that have langsyne been in the clay! There is the bed on which I used to sleep beside my parents, when I was ca'd "Wee Jamie," and on the edge o' which mony a time, when I was a growin callan, hae I sat with the lassies in innocent daffin, a skirl noo and then half wauk-

enin the auld man asleep, or pretendin to be sae, by the ingle-neuk. I see before me the coverlet patched with a million pawterns, chance being the kaleidoscope, and the harmony of the colors perfect as that o' a bank o' flowers. As for mirrors, there was but ae single lookin-glass in a' the house, geyan sair cracket, and the ising rubbed aff, sae that ye had a comical face and queer, when you shaved; and on the Sunday mornin, when the family were buskin themsels for the kirk, it gaed glinting like a sunbeam frae ane till anither, but aye rested longest afore the face o' bonnie Tibby Laidlaw. . . . Puir Tibby! Mony a time hae I tied my neckcloth extendin the knot intil twa white rosebuds, in her een! stannin sae close, in order that I might see my image, that the ruffles o' my Sabbath-sark just touched her breast-knot, and my breath amaisht lifted up the love-lock that the light-hearted cretur used to let hang, as if through carelessness, on ae rosy cheek, just aboon and about the rim o' her wee, white, thin lug, that kent, I trow, a' the tunes ever sung in Scotland. But — oh! that lug listened to what it shouldna hae listened till — and awa frae the Forest fled its Flower wi' an outlandish French prisoner on his parole at Selkirk, but set free by the short peace. He disappeared from her ae night in London, and she became a thing of shame, sin, and sorrow.

We might multiply pictures of this kind almost at will — pictures drawn and appropriately colored with equal delicacy and tenderness, where the scenes and surroundings of the peasant's life are faithfully reflected from lifelong observation. North, who was a Tory to the backbone, like all genuine Conservatives, had a hearty affection for the unsophisticated lower orders; he drew no ideal sketches of blameless existences, but he represented the Scottish peasants as he found them, with their sins and their troubles; doing full justice to their honest independence, and to their fostering of the virtues and affections under the difficulties peculiar to the poor. There is a very delightful description, by the way, in the fourth of the "Noctes," on the laborer's rest and recreation at the midday hour and meal. Of course, it runs like the rest into poetry, and it touches, as is natural, upon Scottish song; for Scottish song is inseparably interwoven with the joys and the sorrows of the peasant. So we scarcely change the subject when we ask our readers to listen once again to the Shepherd as he holds eloquently forth upon Scottish poetry. He is answering North, who has remarked that Scottish music is monotonous: —

So is Scottish Poetry, sir. It has nae great range; but human natur never wearies o' its

ain prime elementary feelings. A man may sit a haill nicht by his ingle, wi' his wife and bairns, without either thinkin or feelin muckle; and yet he's perfectly happy till bed-time, and says his prayers wi' fervent gratitude to the Giver o' a' mercies. It's only when he's beginnin to tire o' the hummin o' the wheel, or o' his wife flytin at the weans, or o' the weans upsettin the stools, or ruggin ane anither's hair, that his fancy takes a very poetical flight into the regions o' the Imagination. Sae lang's the heart sleeps amang its affections, it dwells upon few images; but these images may be infinitely varied; and, when expressed in words, the variety will be felt. Sae that, after a', it's scarcely correct to ca' Scottish Poetry monotonous, or Scottish Music either, ony mair than you would ca' a kintra level, in bonnie gentle ups and downs, or a sky dull, though the clouds were neither mony or multiform; a' depends upon the spirit. Twa-three notes may mak a maist beautifu' tune; twa-three woody knowes a bonny landscape. . . . Sensibility feels a' this; Genius creates it; and in Poetry it dwells, like the charm in the Amulet.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE LADIES LINDORES.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the midst of all the attentions paid him by his neighbors and the visitors who followed each other day by day, there was one duty which John Erskine had to fulfil, and which made a break in the tide of circumstances which seemed to be drifting him towards the family of Lindores, and engaging him more and more to follow their fortunes. When a life is as yet undecided and capable of turning in a new direction, it is common enough, in fact as well as in allegory, that a second path should be visible, branching off from the first, into which the unconscious feet of the wayfarer might still turn, were the dangers of the more attractive way divined. There is always one unobtrusive turning which leads to the safe track; but how is the traveller to know that, whose soul is all unconscious of special importance in the immediate step it takes? John Erskine contemplated his *rapprochement* to the Lindores with the greatest complacency and calm. That it could contain any dangers, he neither knew nor would have believed: he wanted nothing better than to be identified with them, to take up their cause and be known as their partisan. Nevertheless Providence silently, without giving him any warning, opened up the other path to him, and

allowed him in ignorance to choose. If he had known, probably it would not have made the least difference. Young heroes have never in any known history obeyed the dictates of any monitor, either audible or inaudible, who warned them against one connection and in favor of another. Nevertheless he had his chance, as shall be seen. The morning after his first dinner at the Castle, which had been the reopening of a delightful world to him, he decided that he had put off too long his visit to his only relative, and set off through the soft May sunshine, for it was beautiful weather, to pay his respects to his old aunt at Dunearn.

The house of Miss Barbara Erskine at Dunearn opened direct from the street. It was one of the same class of homely Scotch houses to which Dalrulzian itself belonged; but whereas Dalrulzian, being a mansion-house, had two gables, Miss Barbara's Lodging, as she liked it to be called, had but one, stepping out into the broad pathway, not paved, but composed of sand and gravel, which ran along one side of the South Street. This gable was broad enough to give considerable size to the drawing-room which filled the upper story, and which had windows every way, commanding the street and all that went on in it, which was not much. The house was entered by an outside stair, which gave admission to the first floor, on which all the rooms of "the family" were, the floor below being devoted to the uses of the servants, with the single exception of the dining-parlor, which was situated near the kitchen for the convenience of the household. Behind there was a large fragrant old-fashioned garden full of sweet-smelling flowers, interspersed with fruit-trees, and going off into vegetables at the lower end. Notwithstanding that it was so far north, there were few things that would not grow in this garden, and it was a wilderness of roses in their season. Except one or two of the pale China kind—the monthly rose, as Miss Barbara called it, which is so faithful and blows almost all the year round—there were no roses in May; but there was a wealth of spring flowers filling all the borders, and the air was faintly sweet as the old lady walked about in the morning sunshine enjoying the freshness and stir of budding life. She was a portly old lady herself, fresh and fair, with a bright complexion, notwithstanding seventy years of wear and tear, and lively hazel eyes full of vivacity and inquisitiveness. She was one of the fortunate people who take an interest in

everything, and to whom life continues full of excitement and variety to the end. She walked as briskly as though she had been twenty years younger, perhaps more so; for care does not press upon seventy as upon fifty, and the only burden upon her ample shoulders was that of years. She had a soft white Indian shawl wrapped round her, and a hood with very soft blue ribbons tied over her cap. She liked a pretty ribbon as well as ever, and was always well dressed. From the garden, which sloped downwards towards the river, there was an extensive view—a prospect of fields and scattered farm-houses spreading into blue distance into the outline of the hills, towards the north; at the right hand the tower of Dunearn Church, which was not more handsome than church towers generally are in Scotland; and to the left, towards the setting sun, a glimpse of Tinto arrogantly seated on its plateau. Miss Barbara, as she said, "could not bide" the sight of Tinto House. She had planted it out as well as she could; but her trees were perverse, and would separate their branches or die away at the top, as if on purpose to reveal the upstart. On this particular morning of early May, Miss Barbara was not alone: she had a young lady by her side, of whose name and presence at this particular moment the country was full. There was not a house in the neighborhood of any pretensions which she was not engaged to visit; and there was scarcely a family, if truth must be told, which was not involved more or less in an innocent conspiracy on her behalf, of which John Erskine, all unconscious, was the object. His old aunt, as was befitting, had the first chance.

"You need not ask me any more questions," Miss Barbara was saying, "for I think you know just as much about the family, and all the families in the countryside, as anybody. You have a fine curiosity, Nora; and take my word for it, that's a grand gift, though never properly appreciated in this world. It gives you a great deal of interest in your youth, and it keeps you from wearying in your old age—though that's a far prospect for you."

"My mother says I am a gossip born," said Nora, with her pretty smile.

"Never you trouble your head about that—take you always an interest in your fellow-creatures. Better that than the folk in a novelle. Not but what I like a good novelle myself as well as most things in this life. It's just extending your field.

It's like going into a new neighborhood. The box is come from the library this morning," said Miss Barbara in a parenthesis.

"Oh yes, I opened it to have a peep. There is 'Middlemarch' and one of Mr. Trollope's, and several names I don't know."

"No 'Middlemarch' for me," said Miss Barbara, with a wave of her hand. "I am too old for that. That means I've read it, my dear, — the way an experienced reader like me can read a thing — in the air, in the newspapers, in the way everybody talks. No, that's not like going into a new neighborhood — that is getting to the secrets of the machinery, and seeing how everything, come the time, will run down, some to ill and harm, but all to downfall, commonplace, and prosiness. I have but little pleasure in that. And it's pleasure I want at my time of life. I'm too old to be instructed. If I have not learnt my lesson by this time, the more shame to me, my dear."

"But, Miss Barbara, you don't want only to be amused. Oh no: to have your heart touched, sometimes wrung even — to be so sorry, so anxious that you would like to interfere — to follow on and on to the last moment through all their troubles, still hoping that things will take a good turn."

"And what is that but amusement?" said the old lady. "I am not fond of shedding tears; but even that is a luxury in its way — when all the time you are sure that it will hurt nobody, and come all right at the end."

"Lydgate does not turn out all right at the end," said Nora, "nor Rosamond either; they go down and down till you would be glad of some dreadful place at last that they might fall into it and be made an end of. I suppose it is true to nature," said the girl, with a solemnity coming over her innocent face, "that if you don't get better you should go on getting worse and worse — but it is dreadful. It is like what one hears of the place — below."

"Ay, ay, we're not fond nowadays of the place — below; but I'm afraid there must be some truth in it. That woman has found out the secret, you see." Miss Barbara meant no disrespect to the great novelist when she called her "that woman." There was even a certain gratification in the use of the term, as who should say, "Your men, that brag so much of themselves, never found this out" — which was a favorite sentiment with the

old lady. "That's just where she's grand," Miss Barbara continued. "There's that young lad in the Italian book — Teeto — what d'ye call him? To see him get meaner and meaner, and falsier and falsier, is an awful picture, Nora. It's just terrible. It's more than I can stand at my age. I want diversion. Do ye think I have not seen enough of that in my life?"

"People are not bad like that in life," said Nora; "they have such small sins, — they tell fibs — not big lies that mean anything, but small, miserable little fibs; and they are ill-tempered, and sometimes cheat a little. That is all. Nothing that is terrible or tragical —"

Here the girl stopped short with a little gasp, as if realizing something she had not thought of before.

"What is it, my dear?" said Miss Barbara.

"Oh — only Tinto showing through the trees: is that tragedy? No, no. Don't you see what I mean? don't you see the difference? He is only a rough, ill-tempered, tyrannical man. He does not really mean to hurt or be cruel: and poor Lady Car, dear Lady Car, is always so wretched; perhaps she aggravates him a little. She will not take pleasure in anything. It is all miserable, but it is all so little, Miss Barbara; not tragedy — not like Lear or Hamlet — rather a sort of scolding, peevish comedy. You might make fun of it all, though it is so dreadful; and that is how life seems to me — very different from poetry," said Nora, shaking her head.

"Wait," said Miss Barbara, patting her on the shoulder, "till the play is played out and you are farther off. The Lord preserve us! I hope I'm not a prophet of evil; but maybe if you had known poor Lear fighting about the number of his knights with that hard-faced woman Regan, for instance (who had a kind of reason, you'll mind, on her side: for I make no doubt they were very unruly — that daft old man would never keep them in order), you would have thought it but a poor kind of a squabble. Who is this coming in upon us, Nora? I see Janet at the glass door looking out."

"It is a gentleman, Miss Barbara. He is standing talking. I think he means to come out here."

"It will be the minister," said the old lady calmly. "He had far better sit down in the warm room, and send us word, for he's a delicate creature — no constitution in him — aye cold and coughs, and —"

"Indeed it is not Mr. Sterling. He is quite young and—and good-looking, I think. He won't listen to Janet. He is coming here. Miss Barbara, shall I run away?"

"Why should you run away? If it's business, we'll go in; if it's pleasure— Ah! I've seen your face before, sir, or one like it, but I cannot put a name to it. You have maybe brought me a letter? Preserve us all! will it be John Erskine come home to Dalrulzian?"

"Yes, Aunt Barbara, it is John Erskine," said the young man. He had his hat in one hand, and the sun shone pleasantly on his chestnut locks and healthful countenance. He did not perhaps look like a hero of romance, but he looked like a clean and virtuous young Englishman. He took the hand which Miss Barbara held out to him, eagerly, and, with a little embarrassment, not knowing what else to do, bent over it and kissed it—a salutation which took the old lady by surprise, and, being so unusual, brought a delicate color to her old cheek.

"Ah, my man! and so you're John Erskine? I would have known you anywhere, at the second glance if not at the first. You're like your father, poor fellow. He was always a great favorite with me. And so you've come back to your ain at last? Well, I'm very glad to see you, John. It's natural to have a young Erskine in the country-side. You'll not know yet how you like it after all this long absence. And how is your mother, poor body? She would think my pity out of place, I don't doubt; but I'm always sorry for a young woman, sore haddened down with a sma' family, as we say here in the north."

"I don't think she is at all sorry for herself," said John, with a laugh, "but it must be allowed there is a lot of them. There are always heaps of children, you know, in a parson's house."

"And that is true; it's a wonderful dispensation," said Miss Barbara piously, "to keep us down and keep us humble-minded in our position in life. But I'm real glad to see you, and you must tell me where you've come from, and all you've been doing. We'll take a turn round the garden and see my flowers, and then we'll take you in and give you your luncheon. You'll be ready for your luncheon after your walk; or did you ride? This is Miss Nora Barrington, that knows Dalrulzian better than you do, John. Tell Janet, my dear, we'll be ready in an hour, and she must do her best for Mr. John."

While this greeting went on, Nora had been standing very demurely with her hands crossed looking on. She was a girl full of romance and imagination, as a girl ought to be, and John Erskine had long been something of a hero to her. Nora was in that condition of spring-time and anticipation when every new encounter looks as if it might produce untold consequences in the future, still so vague, so sweet, so unknown. She stood with her eyes full of subdued light, full of soft excitement, and observation, and fun; for where all was so airy and uncertain, there was room for fun too, it being always possible that the event, which might be serious or even tragic, might at the same time be only a pleasantry in life. Nora seemed to herself to be a spectator of what was perhaps happening to herself. Might this be hereafter a scene in her existence, like "the first meeting between"—say Antony and Cleopatra, say Romeo and Juliet? Several pictures occurred to her of such scenes. At one time there were quite a number of them in all the picture-galleries. "First meeting of Edward IV. with Elizabeth Woodville:" where all unconscious, the fair widow kneels, the gallant monarch sees in his suppliant his future queen. All this was fun to Nora, but very romantic earnest all the same. The time might come when this stranger would say to her, "Do you remember that May morning in old Aunt Barbara's garden?" and she might reply, "How little we imagined *then*!" Thus Nora, with a shy delight, forestalled in the secret recesses of her soul the happiness that might never come, and yet made fun of her own thoughts all in the same breath. John's bow to her was not half so graceful or captivating as his salutation to Miss Barbara, but that was nothing; and she went away with a pleasant sense of excitement to instruct Janet about the luncheon and the new-comer. Miss Barbara's household was much moved by the arrival. Janet, who was the housekeeper, lingered in the little hall into which the garden door opened, looking out with a curiosity which she did not think it necessary to disguise; and Agnes, Miss Barbara's own woman, stood at the staircase window half-way up. When Nora came in, those two personages were conversing freely on the event.

"He's awfu' like the Erskines; just the cut of them about the shouthers, and that lang neck——"

"Do you ca' that a lang neck? nae

langer than is very becoming. I like the head carried high. He has his father's walk," said Agnes pensively; "many's the time I've watched him along the street. He was the best-looking of all the Erskines; if he hadna marriet a bit handless creature —"

"Handless or no' handless," said Janet, "matters little in that condition o' life."

"Eh, but it mattered muckle to him. He might have been a living man this day if there had been a little mair sense in her head. She might have made him change his wet feet and all his dreeping things when he came in from the hillside. It was the planting of yon trees that cost bonnie Johnny Erskine his life. The mistress was aye of that opinion. Eh, to think when ye have a man, that ye shouldna be able to take care of him!" said Agnes, with a sort of admiring wonder. She had never attained that dignity herself. Janet, who was a widow, gave a glance upward at the pensive old maiden of mingled condescension and contempt.

"And if ye had a man, ye would be muckle made up wi' him," she said. "It's grand to be an auld maid, for that—that ye aye keep your faith in the men. This ane'll be for a wife, too, like a' the rest. I could gie him a word in his ear —"

"It will be something for our young misses to think about. A fine young lad, and a bonnie house. He'll have a' our siller, besides his ain,—and that will be a grand addition —"

"If he behaves himself!" said Janet. "The mistress is a real sensible woman. You'll no' see her throw away her siller upon a prodigal, if he were an Erskine ten times over."

"And wha said he was a prodigal?" cried Agnes, turning round from the landing upon her fellow-servant, who was at once her natural opponent and bosom friend. Nora was of opinion by this time that she had listened long enough.

"Miss Barbara says that her nephew will stay to luncheon, Janet. You are to do your best for him. It is Mr. Erskine, from Dal-rizian," Nora said, with most unnecessary explanation. Janet turned round upon her quietly, yet with superior dignity.

"By this time of day, Miss Nora," said Janet, "I think I ken an Erskine when I see him; and also, when a visitor enters this door at twelve o'clock at noon, that he'll stay to his lunch, and that I maun do my best."

"It is not my fault," cried the girl, half amused, half apologetic. "I tell you only,

Janet, what Miss Barbara said. Perhaps it was to get rid of me to send me indoors out of the way."

"Naething more likely," said the housekeeper. "She canna be fashed with strangers when her ain are at her hand."

"Woman!" cried Agnes, from the landing, "how dare you say sae of my mistress? You'll never mind, Miss Nora. Come up here, my bonnie young leddy, and you'll have a grand sight of him among the trees."

"Ay, glower at him," said Janet, as she went away. "You wouldna be so muckle ta'en up with them if ye kent as much about men as me."

"Na, you'll pay no attention," said Agnes anxiously; "it's no' real malice—just she thinks she has mair experience. And so she has mair experience—the only marriet woman in the house. There's your mamma, with a bonnie family, takes nothing upon her, no more than if she was a single person; but Janet has it a' her ain way. Stand you here, Miss Nora, at this corner, and you'll have a grand sight of him. He's behind the big bourtreebush; but in a moment—in a moment —"

"I don't want to see Mr. Erskine," said Nora laughing. "I have seen him; most likely I shall see him at lunch. He is just like other people,—like dozens of gentlemen —"

"Eh, but when you think that you never ken what may happen—that *you* may be the man, for all we ken!"

When Agnes thus put into words the idea which had (she would not deny it to herself) glanced through Nora's own mind, she was so hypocritical as to laugh, as at a great piece of absurdity—but at the same time so honest as to blush.

"I believe you are always thinking of—that sort of thing," she said.

"Awfu' often, Miss Nora," said Agnes, unabashed—"especially when there's young folk about; and after a', is there onything that's sae important? There's me and the mistress, we've stood aloof from a' that; but I canna think it's been for oor happiness. Her—it was her ain doing; but me—it's a very strange thing to say: I've kent many that were far from my superiors—as far as a person can judge—that have had twa-three offers; but me, I never had it in my power. You'll think it a very strange thing, Miss Nora?"

"I know," said Nora; "and you so pretty. It is quite extraordinary." This was the reply that Agnes expected to her

favorite confession. She was pretty still at fifty, — slim and straight, with delicate features, and that ivory complexion which we associate with refinement and good blood; and the old waiting-woman knew how to *faire valoir* her fine person and features. She was dressed delicately in a black gown, with a white kerchief of spotless net — like a lady, everybody said. She shook her head with a smile of melancholy consciousness.

"It's no' looks that does it," she said; "it's — Well, I canna tell. It's when you ken how to humor them and flatter them. But bless me, there's Janet, a woman that never flattered man nor woman either! I canna understand it, — it's beyond me. But you mustna follow the mistress, Miss Nora. She's a happy woman enough, and a bonnie woman for her age, coming up there under her ain trees, — just look at her. But if that young lad had been her son, instead of just a distant cousin —"

"Oh, but boys give a great deal of trouble," said Nora seriously. "Dear Miss Barbara, I like her best as she is."

"But you manna follow her example, my bonnie leddy, — you manna follow her example. Take a pattern by your ain mammaw. I ca' her a happy woman, young yet, and a good man, and a bonnie posie of bairns. Eh! I ca' her a happy woman. And takes no-thing upon her!" said Agnes, — "nothing upon her. You'll come up the stair, Miss Nora, and look at yoursel in the glass. Oh no, there's no-thing wrang with your bonnie hair. I like it just so, — a wee blown about in the mornin' air. Untidy! bless me, no' the least untidy! but just — give a look in the glass, and if you think another color would be more becoming, I have plenty ribbons. Some folk thinks yellow's very artistic; but the mistress canna bide yellow. She's owre fair for it, and so are you."

"Why should I change my ribbon? It is quite tidy," said Nora, almost with indignation, standing before Miss Barbara's long cheval-glass. Agnes came and stood behind her, arranging her little collar and the draperies of her dress with caressing hands. And to tell the truth, Nora herself could not shut out from her mind an agreeable consciousness that she was looking "rather nice; for me," she added, in her own mind. The morning breeze had ruffled an incipient curl out of the hair which she had brushed, demure and smooth, over her forehead in the morning. It was a thing that nobody suspected

when she was fresh from her toilet, but the wind always found out that small eccentricity, and Nora was not angry with the wind. Her ribbon was blue, and suited her far better than the most artistic yellow. All was fresh and fair about her, like the spring morning. "Na; I wouldna change a thing," Agnes said, looking at her anxiously in the glass, where they made the prettiest picture, the handsome old maid looking like a lady-in-waiting, her fine head appearing over the girl's shoulder, — a lady-in-waiting anxiously surveying her princess, about to meet for the first time with King Charming, who has come to marry her. This was the real meaning of the group.

Nora did not change her ribbon or her own appearance in any way, but she gave a glance to the table set out for luncheon, and renewed the flowers on it, watching all the while the other group which passed and repassed the large, round window of the dining-room, their voices audible as they talked. Miss Barbara had taken John's arm, which was a proof that he had found the way to her favor; and she was evidently asking him a hundred questions. Snatches of their talk about his travels, about his plans, something which she could not make out about the Lindores, caught the ear of Nora. They saw her seated near the window, so there could be no reason why she should stop her ears. And Nora thought him "very nice" — that all-useful adjective. She could scarcely help letting her imagination stray to the familiar place which she had known all her life — her "dear Dalrulzian," which she had lamented so openly, which now she felt it would no longer be decorous to lament. He looked very like it, she thought. She could see him in imagination standing in the kindly open door, on the walk, looking the very master the place wanted. Papa had been too old for it. It wanted a young man, a young — Well — she laughed and colored involuntarily — of course a young wife too. In all likelihood *that* was all settled, the young wife ready, so that there was no reason to feel any embarrassment about it. And so he knew the Lindores! She would ask Edith all about him. There was no doubt he was a very interesting figure in the country-side, "something for the misses to think about," as Agnes said, though it was somewhat humiliating to think that "that dreadful man at Tinto" had roused a similar excitement. But the oftener John Erskine passed the window, the more he pleased

Nora Barrington. He was "very nice," she was sure. How kind and careful he was of Miss Barbara! How frank and open his countenance! his voice and his laugh so natural and cheerful! Up to this time, though Nora's imagination had not been utterly untouched, she was still free of any serious inclination, almost if not entirely fancy-free. It could not be denied that when the new Rintoul became known in the country-side, he, too, had been the object of many prognostications. And he had been, she felt, "very nice" to Nora. Though he had pretensions far above hers, and was not in the least likely to ally himself to a family without fortune, his advances had been such as a girl cannot easily overlook. He was the first who had paid Nora "attention," and awakened her to a consciousness of power. And she had been flattered and pleased, being very young. But Nora now felt herself at that junction of the two roads, which, as has been said, is inevitable in the experience of every young soul. She was standing in suspense, saying to herself, with a partial sense of treachery and guilt, that Mr. Erskine was still more nice than Lord Rintoul. John Erskine of Dalrulzian; there was something delightful in the very name. All this, it is true, was entirely visionary, without solid foundation of any kind; for they had exchanged nothing but two shy bows, not a word as yet — and whether he would be as "nice" when he talked, Nora did not know.

Her decision afterwards, made with some mortification, was, that he was not nearly so nice when he talked. He showed no wish to talk to her at all, which was an experience quite out of Nora's way. She sat and listened, for the most part, at this simple banquet, growing angry in spite of herself, and altogether changing her opinion about Lord Rintoul. If she had been a little girl out of the nursery, John Erskine could scarcely have taken less notice of her. Miss Barbara and he continued their talk as if Nora had no existence at all.

"I always thought it a great pity that you were brought up so far from home," the old lady said. "You know nothing about your own place, or the ways of the country-side. It will take you a long time to make that up. But the neighbors are all very kind, and Lindores, no doubt, will be a great resource, now there's a young family in it. Fortunately for you, John, you're not grand enough nor rich enough to come into my lord's plans."

"Has my lord plans? For county hospitals and lunatic asylums. So he told me; and he wants my help. To hear even so much as that astonished me. When I knew him he was an elegant hypochondriac, doing nothing at all —"

"He does plenty now, and cares much, for the world and the things of the world," said Miss Barbara. "I think I have divined his meaning; but we will wait and see. You need not sit and make those faces at me, Nora. I know well enough *they* are not to blame. A woman should know how to stand up for her own child better than that; but she was just struck helpless with surprise, I say nothing different. Speak of manœuvring mothers! manœuvring fathers are a great deal worse. I cannot away with a man that will sacrifice his own flesh and blood. Fiegh! I would not do it for a kingdom. And the son, you'll see, will do the same. Hold you your tongue, Nora. I know better — the son will do the very same. He will be sold to some grocer's daughter for her hogsheds. Perhaps they're wanted; two jointures to pay is hard upon any estate, and a title will always bring in money when it's put up for sale in a judicious way. But you must have your wits about you now, if you have any dealings with your elegant hypochondriac, John, my man. You're too small — too small for him; but if you had fifty thousand a year, you would soon — soon be helpless in his hands —"

"Oh, Miss Barbara," cried Nora, "you are unjust to Lord Lindores. Remember how kind he has been to us, and we have not fifty thousand, nor fifty hundred a year."

"You're not a young man," said Miss Barbara; "but, John, take you care of dangling about Lindores. I am not naming any names; but there may be heart-aches gotten there — nothing more for a man of your small means. Oh ay! perhaps I ought to hold my tongue before Nora; but she will be well advised if she takes care too; and besides, she knows all about it as well as I do myself."

"I hope," said John courteously, for he saw that Nora's composure was disturbed by these last warnings, and he was glad of a chance to change the subject, "I hope I may be so fortunate as to see Colonel Barrington before he leaves the country. He has done so well by Dalrulzian, I should like to thank him for his care."

This made Nora more red than before. She could not get over that foolish idea

that Dalrulzian was far more to her than to this stranger, who could not care for it as she did. She felt that his thanks were an offence. "Papa has gone, Mr. Erskine," she said, with unusual stateliness. "I am left behind to pay some visits. Everybody here has been so good to us."

"That means we are all fond of her bit bright face," said Miss Barbara; "but we'll say no more on that subject, Nora. Human nature's selfish in grain. The like of me will take no trouble for lad or lass that is not sweet to see, and a comfort to the heart."

"I never heard such a pretty apology for selfishness before," said John. And Miss Barbara took his compliment in good part. But he and Nora made no further approach to each other. Those praises of her made him draw back visibly, she thought, and embarrassed herself beyond bearing. To be praised before an unsympathetic, silently protesting audience — can anything be more humiliating? Nora was conscious of something like dislike of John Erskine before he went away.

And yet his state of feeling was natural enough. He believed that the young lady, so dangerously suitable for him, the very wife he wanted, was being thrust upon him on every side, and the thought revolted him. No doubt, he thought, if she were conscious of it, it must be revolting to her too; and in such a case the highest politeness was to be all but rude to her, to show at once and conclusively that schemes of the kind were hopeless. This sentiment was strengthened in the present case by the irritation caused by Miss Barbara's warning about Lindores, and the heartache which was all that a man of his means was likely to get there. He laughed at it, yet it made him angry. He who had been always used to feel himself a person of importance — he for whom, even now, the whole country was taking the trouble to scheme — to have himself suddenly classified with other small deer as quite beneath the consideration of the Lindores family, too small for my lord's plans! It was scarcely possible to imagine anything more irritating. After all, a Scotch lord was no such grand affair; and John could not be ignorant that, five years ago, neither father nor mother would have repulsed him. Now! but the doubt, the risk, did not induce the young man to be wise — to put Lady Edith out of his imagination, and turn his thoughts to the other, just as pretty, if that were all, who was manifestly within his reach. What a pity that young people are so

slow to see reason in such matters, that they will never take the wiser way! Thus John had his opportunity offered to him to escape from a world of troubles and embarrassments before he had committed himself to that dangerous path; and distinctly refused, and turned his back upon it, not knowing — as indeed at the real turning-point of our fortunes we none of us know.

But as he set out on his homeward walk, his eyes caught that great house of Tinto, which from Dunearn was the central object in the landscape — an immense house, seated on a high platform of rock, dominating the river and the whole country, with scarcely wood enough about it to afford any shadow; an ostentatious pile of building, with that spot of audacious red against the grey sky — the flag always flying (set him up! Miss Barbara said) when the master was at home, which was, so to speak, the straw which broke the camel's back, the supreme piece of vanity which the county could not tolerate. Pat Torrance to mount a flag upon his house to mark his presence! What more could Sacred Majesty itself do? John Erskine felt as if some malicious spirit had thrown a stone at him out of the clouds as his eye was caught by that flaunting speck of red. He felt all the local intolerance of the man, without a claim but his money to crowt thus over his neighbors. And then he thought of Carry Lindores and her poetry and enthusiasm. That was how the earl disposed of his daughters. A thrill ran through John's frame, but it was a thrill of defiance. He raised his stick unawares and waved it, as if at the big bully who thus scorned him from afar.

CHAPTER IX.

LADY CAROLINE TORRANCE was in her morning-room with her children when her husband came to tell her of his visit to Dalrulzian. He had kept it for twenty-four hours, in order to have an opportunity of telling it at his leisure, and making it as disagreeable to her as possible; for indeed he was fully convinced in his own mind that John had been the man about whom his broken-hearted bride had made a confession to him. The confession had not disarmed or moved him to generosity; not that his delicacy was wounded by the thought of his wife's engagement to some one else before she saw him — no such fantastical reason moved him; but that he was furious at the thought that this unseen personage still remained agreeable

to her, and that in secret she could retire upon the recollection of some one whom she had once preferred, or perhaps did now prefer, to himself. This was insupportable to him. He did not care very much for filling her heart himself; but he meant that she should belong to him utterly, and not at all, even in imagination or by a passing thought, to anybody else. Lady Car's morning-room was the last of a gorgeous but faded suite of rooms opening off the drawing-room, from which it was separated by heavy velvet curtains. Everything was heavy and grand even in this sanctuary, where it was supposed the lady of the house was to find her refuge when no longer on duty, so to speak — no longer bound to sit in state and receive her visitors. It was furnished like the rest, with gilded chairs, a table of Florentine mosaic, and curtains of ruby velvet looped and puckered into what the upholsterer of the late Mrs. Torrance's time thought the most elegant and sumptuous fashion. The gilding was a little tarnished, the velvet faded; but still it was too fine for anything less than a royal habitation. It is supposed that princesses, being used to it, like to knock their elbows against ormolu ornaments, and to put down their thimbles and scissors (if they ever use such vulgar implements) upon marble; but poor Lady Car did not. She was chilly by nature, and she never had got over her horror of these additional chillinesses. The Florentine marble made her shiver. It was far too fine to have a cover over it, which she had ventured once to suggest, to her husband's horror. "What! cover it up as if it were plain mahogany — a thing that was worth no one could tell how much!" So she gave it up, and shivered all the more. It was a chilly day of May, which the fresh foliage outside, and a deceitful sun not strong enough to neutralize the east wind, made only a little less genial, and Lady Car sat very close to the fire, in a chair as little gilt as could be found, and with a little table beside her covered with a warm and heavy cover, as if to make up for the naked coldness of the rest. The room had three large windows, looking from the platform upon which the house stood, over the wide country — a great landscape full of greening fields and foliage, and an infinite blue and white sky, the blue somewhat pale but very clear, the clouds mounting in Alpine peaks into the far distance and lying along the horizon in long lines. The windows, it need not be said, were plate-glass, so that an im-

pression of being out of doors and exposed to the full keenness of the breeze was conveyed to the mind. How often had poor Lady Car sat and shivered looking over that wistful sweep of distance in her loneliness, and knowing that no one could ever come out of it who would bring joy to her or content! She had never been beautiful, the reader is aware. She was plain now, in the absence of all that sunshine and happiness which beautifies and brightens homely faces. And yet her face was not a homely face. The master of Tinto had got what he wanted — a woman whose appearance could never be overlooked, or whom any one could undervalue. Her air was full of natural distinction though she had no beauty. Her slight, pliant figure, like a long sapling bending before every breeze, had a grace of gentle yielding which did not look like weakness; and her smile, if perhaps a little timid, was winning and gracious. But her nose and her upper lip were both too long, and the pretty wavering color she had possessed in her youth was gone altogether. Ill-natured people called her sallow; and indeed, though it is not a pretty word, it was not, at this stage of her existence, far from the truth.

Her two children were playing beside her on the carpet. Poor lady! here was perhaps the worst circumstance in her hard lot. As if it were not enough to be compelled to take Pat Torrance for her husband, it had been her melancholy fate to bring other Torrances, all his in temper and feature, into the world. This is an aggravation of which nobody would have thought. In imagination we are all glad to find a refuge for an unhappy wife in her children, whom instinctively we allot to her as the natural compensation — creatures like herself and belonging to her, although the part in them of the obnoxious father cannot be ignored. But here the obnoxious father was all in all; even the baby of two years old on the rug at her feet, the little girl who by all laws ought to have been like her mother, showed in her little dark countenance as small relationship to Lady Caroline as to any stranger. They were their father's children: they had his black hair, a peculiarity which sometimes is extremely piquant and attractive in childhood, giving an idea of unusual development; but, on the other hand, sometimes is — not. Little Tom and Edie were of those to whom it is not attractive, for they had heavy fat cheeks, and the same light, large, projecting eyes which were so marked a feature

in their father's face. Poor Lady Car thought they fixed their eyes upon her with a cynical gaze when she tried to sing to them — to tell them baby-stories. She tried her best, but that was perhaps too fine for these children of a coarser race. They scrambled down from her lap, and liked better to roll upon the floor, or break with noisy delight the toys which were showered upon them, leaving the poor young mother to gaze and wonder, and feel as much rebuffed as if these two infants of two and three had been twenty years older. They screamed with delight when their father tossed them up in his arms, but they escaped from their mother's knee when she would have coaxed them to quiet. Poor Lady Car! they were a wonder and perplexity to her. She was half afraid of them though they were her own.

Torrance had come in from the woods, which he had been inspecting with his forester, and perhaps something had crossed him in this inspection, for he was a tyrant by nature, and could not tolerate a contrary opinion; whereas the officials, so to speak, of a great estate in Scotland, are much given to opinions, and by no means to be persuaded to relinquish them. The forester had objected to something the master suggested, and the agent had taken the forester's part. The master of Tinto came in fuming. To give in was a thing intolerable to him, and to give in to his own servant! But here was another servant whom he need not fear bullying, who could not throw up her situation and put him to inconvenience, who was forced to put up with as much indignity as he chose to put upon her. This thought gave his mind a welcome relief; he strode along through all the gilded rooms with a footstep which meant mischief. Lady Caroline heard it afar off, and recognized the sound. What could it be now? Her mind ran hurriedly over the recent occurrences of the day, to think what possible offence she could have given him. Nothing — or at least she could think of nothing. It did not require a very solid reason for the transference to her shoulders of the rage which he did not think it expedient to bestow upon some one else. He came in kicking out of the way the toys with which the children were playing.

"These monkeys," he said, "would ruin a Jew if they grow up the way you are breeding them, my lady. That cost a pound or two yesterday, and now it's all in bits. If your family could stand such extravagance, mine can't. Tom, my lad,

if you break your fine toys like this, I'll break your head. But it's not the children's fault," he added, "it's the way they're bred."

"It is very wrong of Tommy," said poor Lady Car, "but you laughed and clapped your hands yesterday when I found fault."

"I won't have the boy's spirit broken — that's another thing. Breeding's an affair of day by day; but it can't be expected that you should take such trouble, with your head full of other things."

"What other things?" cried Lady Car. "Oh, Pat, have a little pity! What else have I to think of? I may not understand the children, but they are my only thought."

Here he gave a mocking, triumphant laugh. "No, I dare say you don't understand them. They're of my side of the house," he said. "It was a pleasure to him, but not an unalloyed pleasure, for he would have liked to secure in his daughter at least some reflection of her mother's high-bred air, which had always been her attraction in his eyes. "As for other things," he added, "there's plenty: for instance, I have just been visiting your old friend."

"My old friend?" Lady Caroline looked at him with wondering eyes.

"Oh, that is the way, is it? pretend you don't understand! I went expressly for your sake. You see what a husband I am: not half appreciated — ready to please his wife in every sort of way. I don't think much of your taste, though: under size," said Torrance, with a laugh, — "decidedly under size."

Lady Car looked at him with a momentary elevation of her slender, drooping throat. The action was one that had a certain pride in it, and this was what her husband specially admired in her. But she did not understand him, nor was there any secret in her gentle soul to be found out by innuendoes. She shook her head gently, and drooped it again with her habitual bend.

"I do not know what you mean. It must be some mistake," she said.

"It is no mistake, Lady Car. That's not my way to make mistakes. It suits you not to know. That makes me all the more certain. Oh, I'm not afraid of you. We're not in Italy or any of these places. And you're a great deal too proud to go wrong: you're too cold, you have not got it in you."

Lady Caroline raised her head again, but this time in sheer surprise. "Pat,"

she said, faltering, "all I know is, that you mean to insult me. I know nothing but that. What is it? Do not insult me before the children."

"Pshaw! how should the children understand?"

"Not what you mean; but neither do I understand that. The children know as well as I do that you mean to hurt me. What is it?—what have I done?"

"By Jove!" he said, looking at her, "to see you there with your white face, one would think you never had done anything but good all your life. You look as if butter would not melt in your mouth. Not the sort of woman to look down upon her husband and count him a savage, and keep thinking of a nice, smooth, soft-spoken— You would never tell me his name, and I was a fool, and didn't insist upon; but now he has come back to be your ladyship's neighbor, and see you every day."

She did not answer immediately. She looked at him with a curious light stealing into her soft grey eyes, raising her head again. Then she said slowly, "I think you must mean Mr. Erskine of Dalrulzian. If so, you have made a great mistake. I think he is younger than I am. He was not much more than a boy when I knew him. He never was anything—but an acquaintance."

"It's likely you'll get me to believe that," cried Torrance scornfully. He jumped up from his seat, and came and stood in front of the fire, with his back to it, brushing against her dress, so close to her that she had to draw back out of his way. "An acquaintance! There are different meanings to that word. I've been to see him on your account, my lady. I've asked him to come here. Oh, I'm not afraid of you, as I tell you. You're too cold and too proud to go wrong. You shall see him as much as you like—I have every confidence in you—see him, and talk to him, and tell him what you think of your husband. It will be a nice sentimental amusement for you; and as for me, I'll always be by to look on."

He laughed as he spoke, angrily, fiercely, and glared down upon her from under his eyelids with a mixture of fury and satisfaction. She pushed her chair back a little with a shiver, drawing away her dress, upon which he had placed his foot.

"If it was as you suppose," she said, trembling, "what misery you would be planning for me! It makes me cold indeed to think of such cruelty. What! you would put me in such a strait! You

would force me into the society of one—oh, Pat, surely you are doing yourself wrong! You could not be so cruel as that!"

He laughed again, striding across the fireplace, ever encroaching more upon her corner. His face had grown red with wrath. He was not without feeling, such as it was, and this which he supposed his wife's acknowledgment that his cruel device could indeed wound her, gave himself a start of self-reproach and alarm, though there was pleasure in the power he felt he had acquired of causing pain.

"Ah, I've caught you, have I? I've caught you at last!" he cried, with a tone of triumph.

"You could not do it!" cried Lady Caroline, her pale face flushed. "No! do not say you made such a cruel plan—no, no!—to entrap the poor woman who is your wife—alas! who never did you harm—to rend her heart in two, and make her life more miserable. No, no! do not tell me you have this cunning as well as—all the rest; do not tell me! You would not do it, you could not do it. There is no such cruelty in man."

"It's a satisfaction," he cried, his face burning and glowing, "to think I have you in my grip, Lady Car."

She breathed quick and hard, pushed back in her corner, gazing up at him with a look from which a stronger tremor had taken all the timidity. It was some time before she could speak. "Do not think," she said, "that I am afraid of you. I am only horrified to think—but I might have known. Mr. Erskine, by whom you think you can make me more unhappy, is nothing to me—nothing, nothing at all, nothing at all! He is not the gentleman I thought it right to tell you about—no, no! a very different person. I do not want to see him, because I should not like—old friends to know; but Mr. Erskine is nothing to me—nothing!"

Whether he would have been convinced by the vehemence with which she said this alone, cannot be known—for at that moment the carefully festooned velvet curtains were disturbed in the regulated folds which nobody at Tinto had ever ventured to alter, and Edith suddenly appeared with an anxious and pale countenance. She had heard the raised voices as she approached, and her sister's "nothing to me, nothing!" had been quite distinct to her as she came in. She could not imagine what it was that could have excited poor Carry so much, and Edith had a nervous dislike of any scene. She

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could not draw back, having with difficulty sent away the servant who was conducting her punctiliously to her sister's presence, and she felt herself compelled to face the quarrel, which was evidently a serious one. Edith was fastidious and sensitive, with all the horror of a girl who had never seen anything like domestic contention or the jars of family life. Lord Lindores and his wife had not always agreed since his recent elevation—indeed they had disagreed bitterly and painfully on the most serious questions; but such a thing as a quarrel had been unknown in their household. To Edith it seemed such an offence against good taste and all the courtesies of life, as nothing could excuse—petty and miserable, as well as unhappy and wrong. She was annoyed as well as indignant to be drawn into it thus against her will. Carry had hitherto concealed with all her might from her young sister the state of conflict in which she lived. Her unhappiness she did not hide; but she had managed to keep silent in Edith's presence, so that the girl had never been an actual witness of the wranglings of the ill-matched pair. But poor Lady Car for once was moved out of her usual precautions. She was too much excited even to remember them. She appealed to her sister at once, hailing her appearance with eagerness, and without pausing to think.

"Edith," she cried, "you have come in time. Tell Mr. Torrance that Mr. Erskine, who has just come home, was not a special friend of mine. You can speak, for you know. Mr. Torrance says—he thinks"—here Lady Car came to herself, perceiving the disturbed looks of her sister, and remembering her own past reserve. She paused, and forced herself into a miserable smile. "It is not worth while entering into the story," she said; "it does not—matter much. It is only a mistake, a—a difference of opinion. You can tell Mr. Torrance —"

"I don't want any information," said Torrance sulkily. He, too, felt embarrassed by the sudden introduction of Edith into the discussion. He moved away from the fire with a rude attempt at civility. Edith, in her youthful absolutism, and want of toleration or even understanding of himself, overawed him a little. She was not, he thought, nearly so aristocratic in appearance as his wife; but he was slightly afraid of her, and had never been at his ease in her presence. What was the opinion of this little chit to him? He asked himself the question often, but it did not divest him of that vague percep-

tion of his own appearance in her eyes, which is the most mortifying of all reflections. No caricature made of us can be so disconcerting. Just so Haman must have seen himself, a wretched pretender, through the eyes of that poor Jew in the gate. Torrance saw himself an exaggerated boor, a loud-speaking, underbred clown, in the clear regard, a little contemptuous, never for a moment overawed by him, of Edith Lindores. He had perhaps believed his wife's denial in respect to John Erskine while they were alone, but he believed her entirely when she called Edith to witness. He was subdued at once—he drew away from before the fire with sully politeness, and pushed forward a chair. "It's a cold day," he said. The quarrel died in a moment a natural death. He hung about the room for a few minutes, while Edith, to lessen the embarrassment of the situation, occupied herself with the children. As for Lady Car, she had been too much disturbed to return at once to the pensive calm which was her usual aspect. She leaned back in her chair, pushed up into the corner as she had been by her husband's approach, and with her thin hands clasped together. Her breath still came fast, her poor breast heaved with the storm—she said nothing to aid in the gradual restoration of quiet. The spell being once broken, perhaps she was not sorry of the opportunity of securing Edith's sympathy. There is a consolation in disclosing such pangs, especially when the creator of them is unbeloved. To tell the cruelties to which she was subject, to pour out her wrongs, seemed the only relief which poor Carry could look forward to. It had not been her will to betray it to her sister; but now that the betrayal had taken place, it was almost a pleasure to her to anticipate the unburdening of her heart. All that she desired for the moment was that he would go away, that she might be free to speak. The words seemed bursting from her lips even while he was still there. Perhaps Torrance himself had a perception of this; but then he did not believe that his wife had not a hundred times made her complaint to Edith before. And thus there ensued a pause which was not a pleasant one. Neither the husband nor the wife spoke, and Edith's agitated discourses with the children were the only sounds audible. They were not prattling, happy children, capable of making a diversion in such circumstances; and Edith was not so fond of the nephew and niece,

who so distinctly belonged to their father, as she ought to have been. The situation was relieved by a summons to Torrance to see some one below. He went away reluctantly, jealously, darting a threatening look at his wife as he looked back. Edith was as much alarmed for what was coming as Torrance was. She redoubled her attentions to the children, hoping to avert the disclosure which she, too, saw was so near.

"It is their time to—go back to the nursery," said Carry, with a voice full of passion, ringing the bell; and the children were scarcely out of hearing when the storm burst forth: "I have borne a great deal, oh, a great deal—more, far more, than you can ever know; but think, think! what he intended for me. To invite John Erskine here, thinking he was—some one else; to bring us into each other's company day after day; to tempt me to the old conversations, the old walks. Don't contradict me—he said so: that I might feel my misery, and drink my cup to the last drops."

"Carry, Carry! you must be mistaking him; he could not wish that; it would be an insult—it would be impossible."

"That is why it pleases him," cried the poor wife; "he likes to watch and make sure that I suffer. If I did not suffer, it would do him no good. He says I am too proud and too cold to—go wrong, Edith! That is how he speaks to your sister; and he wishes to show me—to show me, as if I did not know—what I have and what I have lost!"

"Carry, you must not. Oh, don't let us even think of what is past now!"

"It is easy for you to say so. I have tried—oh, how I have tried!—never to think of the past—even now, even today. Think, only think! Because he supposed *that*, he went expressly to see John Erskine, to ask him to come here, planning to torture me,—no matter to him, because he was sure I was too proud to go wrong. He wanted to watch the meeting—to see how we would look at each other, what we would say, how we would behave ourselves at such a moment. Can you believe it, Edith? Was there ever anything in a book, in the theatre, so cruel, so terrible? Do you suppose one can help, after that, thinking of the past, thinking of the future too?—for suppose it had been—Edward—Oh no, no! I don't want to name his name; but suppose it had been—he. Another time it may be he. He may come to visit John Erskine. We may meet in the

world; and then I know—I know what is before me. This man—oh, I cannot call him by any name!—this man, whom I belong to, who can do what he pleases with my life—I know now what his pleasure will be,—to torture me, Edie!—for no purpose but just to see me suffer—in a new way. He has seen me suffer already—oh, how much!—and he is *blasé*! he wants something more piquant, a newer torture, a finer invention to get more satisfaction out of me. And you tell me I must not think of the past!"

"Carry, Carry!" cried Edith, trembling; "what can I say? You ought not to bear it. Come home; come back to us. Don't stay with him, if this is how you feel about him, another day."

Carry shook her head. "There is no going back," she said; "alas! I know that now, if never before. To go back is impossible: my father would not allow it; my mother would not approve it. I dare not myself. No, no, that cannot be. However dreadful the path may be, all rocks or thorns, and however your feet may be torn and bleeding—forward, forward one must go. There is no escape. I have learned that."

There was a difference of about six years between them—not a very great period; and yet what a difference it made! Edith had in her youthful mind the certainty that there was a remedy for every evil, and that what was wrong should not be permitted to exist. Carry knew no remedy at all for her own condition, or, indeed, in the reflection of her own despair, for any other. Nothing was to be done that she knew of; nothing could do any good. To go back was impossible. She sat leaning back in her chair, clasping her white, thin hands, looking into the vacant air,—knowing of no aid, but only a little comfort in the mere act of telling her miseries—nothing more; while Edith sat by her, trembling, glowing, impatient, eager for something to be done.

"Does mamma know?" the girl asked, after a pause.

Carry did not move from her position of quiet despair. "Do you think," she said, "it is possible that mamma, who has seen so much, should not know?"

To this Edith could make no reply, knowing how often the subject had been discussed between her mother and herself, with the certainty that Carry was unhappy, though without any special explanation to each other of the manner of her unhappiness.

"But if my father were to speak to him, Carry? My father ought to do it; it was he who made you — it was he who —"

"No one can say anything; no one can do anything. I am sorry I told you, Edie; but how could I help it? And it does me a little good to speak. I must complain, or I should die."

"Oh, my poor Car, my poor Car!" Edith cried, throwing herself upon her knees beside her sister. Die! she said, within herself; would it not be better — far better — to die? It was living that seemed to her impossible. But this was another of the sad pieces of knowledge which Carry had acquired: that you cannot die when you please, as the young and untried are apt to suppose — that mortal anguish does not always kill. It was Edith who was agitated and excited, seeking eagerly for a remedy — any remedy — even that heroic and tragical one; but Carry did not feel that even in that there was any refuge for her now.

This was by no means John Erskine's fault. He was as innocent of it, as unconscious of it, as any man could be; but Edith, an impatient girl, felt a sort of visionary rage against him, in which there was a certain attraction too. It seemed to her as if she must go and tell him of this sad family secret, though he had so little to do with it. For was not he involved, and his coming the occasion of it? If she could but have accused him, confided in him, it would have given her mind a certain relief, though she could not well tell why.

From The Gentleman's Magazine.
MY SPIDER.

A SPIDER, sitting placidly on a hat-peg, awakened in me a vague enthusiasm for natural history; so I captured him, and put him in a bottle. He was lean and gaunt, and had an ominous countenance. The small row of eyes on the vertex of his head looked murder and rapine, and the formidable jaws — which he moved slowly, as if he were sucking his teeth — meant death to those who were his inferiors in strength. He seemed to have been lately in distressed circumstances, for the light came through his very carcass, and his legs were almost as weakly as the gossamer he wove. The strongest part of him seemed to be the stiff hairs that covered him. They stood out independently, and covered his body with

such profusion that I was led to call him Esau.

The bottle most likely did not impart a generous warmth, and probably the garish light of day was not pleasant to this denizen of the rafters and remote corners, yet he settled himself in his new habitation with a calmness which commanded my admiration. No fear entered his breast; he was not daunted by captivity. He did not wildly seek an outlet, like most of the things we call insects. He seemed to be of the school of the ascetic Brahmins, and apparently regarded fate as invincible.

"Even if I keep you in captivity," I said, "I will provide you with a mansion, and you shall have an amply of food." After a little search a wide-necked jar was obtained, and I set to work to catch flies. The jar was glass, and its mouth was covered with muslin; but in case *Arachnida* cared not for light and ventilation, I provided him with a piece of paper rolled conewise, and in this inner chamber he could seek retirement.

On being placed in his new abode, my friend betrayed no curiosity. He merely settled himself on the piece of paper, as it had a more genial feel than the transparent floor. Perhaps he watched me, but I could not tell that from his expression. His face was typical of indifference.

I now began to make havoc among a colony of flies who had apparently spent their lives in obtaining from the window-panes some occult flavor which is not perceptible to our coarser palates. I made three captives, who were passed beneath the muslin door of the jar with a little sleight of hand. The appearance of these flies was my next subject of observation. They each had an individuality which I did not till then know that flies possessed. Their deportment, their figures, their very moral tone, had a distinct stamp; yet there was an harmonious something which united characters so different. The first had a fluffy appearance; his body looked sodden, and he behaved in a fat and sensual manner. He took the grossest pleasure in warming his ventral surface on the side of the jar towards the sun. He sipped the sweets of life to excess, and had lost that activity a fly ought to possess. Alas! his career rendered him unfit to battle in the struggle for existence. He became the spider's first meal.

The second fly had but one wing. He was lean and ill-nurtured, yet he had withal

a chirpy and pleasing manner. He had neither the pompous bearing of opulence nor the boisterous ways of rude health. He was a sweet-tempered and amiable fly, and among the local muscæ undoubtedly occupied the same position that Tiny Tim did in his family. I should have let him go, only I feared that, if I did so, I should also release the third fly, whom my soul loathed. Now, let me tell you why that fly was objectionable. He was the only fly left on the window-panes, and he walked over them with the arrogance of a landlord. I sought to catch him, but each attempt was more futile than the last. He dodged, he flew away from the window, he calmly floated about the room, and I followed him, flapping with my pocket-handkerchief till I visibly perspired. He was as cunning as the fox of Ballybogue, who, you remember, used to take in the newspaper to see where the meets were to be. My temper overcame me, and I swore I would have that fly.

After a hunt, which brought out all my worst characteristics, I caught him, and deposited him in my vivarium, rejoicing to myself that his death-agonies would be some compensation for my pains. As soon as he got into the jar, Mr. Fly discovered that his poor little brother in adversity had a raw place where his wing had been torn off, and he would follow him from place to place to put his sucker on to the sore. It was not the kindliness of the dogs of Lazarus which led him to lick the wound. He saw that Tim did not like it, and as he was a nasty, bullying cad, he persisted in his obnoxious performances. I left him disgusted. He was a beast!

In the course of an hour or so I returned. The sensual fly was in the arms of the spider. The hunter, with his quarry in his clutch, was on the piece of paper, and I could see him well. Four black bead-like eyes, situated on the very summit of his head, gleamed at me with ferocity. His mandibles were stretched to their utmost. The hooked extremity of one was driven into the fly's eye, the other was fixed somewhere about its throat. Between these a pair of jaws were working with a synchronous and scissors-like movement, and his upper and lower lip (for such they were, I afterwards learned) worked, as it were, between whiles. As the jaws approached each other, the lips parted. His palps, or leg-like antennæ, waved slowly as the tail of an angry cat; and his very spinnerets, six in number, stood out turgid with excite-

ment. The fly was still, except for a quivering motion of one of its legs. It was the tremor of death.

For ten minutes at least the spider did not move a limb. The palpi forgot to wave, and he abandoned himself to the full and gross enjoyment of his meal. I forgot the fly's agonies. This poor, starved creature, safe from the persecution of the housemaid, was revelling in the juices of a luscious fly. The gloom of his life was dissipated by a bright spot. Starvation even had a charm when followed by such a meal.

At last he fixed the fly against the paper with one foot, and loosened his grip, and after giving a sigh of satisfaction, proceeded to decapitate his prey. He then held the carcass in such a manner that I thought he was going to blow into it, but he did not. The pangs of hunger were assuaged, and with an Epicurean manner worthy of Brillat-Savarin he sought for some dainty morsel in the chest.

Half an hour after, he still lovingly held his prize, although he ate no longer. The child-rhyme was floating in his memory—

Oh, what fun!
Nice plum bun!
How I wish
It never was done!

I went to bed, and on the morrow another corpse, that of Tim, lay on the floor of the bottle. His expression was placid as in life, and there was that beast of a fly, whom I described before, sucking at the old wound.

Days went on, and Esau's digestion seemed a laborious process. I watched with eagerness to see whether he would lay his hands on his companion by force or fraud. The spider lay immovable, the fly was idly busy in security.

Now, the utter disregard of decency paraded by that fly would have sent a cold shiver down the spine of any proper-minded person. He hustled the corpses of his brethren who were dead. He was constantly trying to extract from their bodies what juices the spider had left. He turned them on their stomachs. He turned them on their backs. He had no regard whatever for the deceased.

I sat in my armchair and pondered over the levity of that wretch till the dinner-bell rang, and I went sorrowfully to my evening meal. "How much superior am I to that fly! If a steak from one of my fellow-creatures were laid before me, I should reject it with abhorrence,"

thought I, "even if it were garnished with the savory onion or the mushroom — ay, even if it were relished with oyster-sauce and the tenderest asparagus. It is only the worst grades of life which can feed upon their kind."

We had chickens for dinner. The liver wing was excellent, and the end-dans of the back afforded pleasant picking. I begged the maid to preserve the bones for a broken-legged dog whom I had adopted.

My plate was brought on to the lawn, and on it were the remains of the fowls; and the dog was carried out with all care to enjoy his meal on the grass. Poor old thing! His tail wagged with a steady flap, his eyes glistened softly, his neck was outstretched, and his nose was agitated with a delicate twitching till he was placed beside his repast. Then he fell to, and with admirable judgment selected the most meaty morsels to commence with.

It was lucky that he had finished two pinions, for "the Philistines were upon him." A pea-hen close by heard the crunching. She listened. Curiosity seized her, and she looked at the eater, first with one eye, then with the other. (That was mere coquetry, as it gave her an opportunity of showing off the graceful movements of her neck.) She approached a few steps with stagy dignity; she saw there was food, and the bird of Juno, forgetting her state, ran with an ungainly and slop-slap step towards the plate.

The bird was large and powerful, and the dog was small and an invalid. He therefore secured the best advantages that the circumstances afforded, and sneaked off on three legs with a drumstick.

"Gristle?" quoth the pea-hen; "excellent! Tendon? better still." — Gaup, gaup. — "A small bone? 'twill do me no harm." Down it went. — "A little picking?" — peck, peck.

"Thou cannibal!" thought I, "those are the remains of thy companions of the farmyard. That fly is not so unnatural, after all. I will let it go."

My resolution was short-lived. Two hours ago there were but a spider and a fly and a piece of paper in the glass jar. Now my friend the spider was evidently getting hungry, and he was exerting himself. Two strong cords were drawn from the paper to the bottom of the jar, and Esau meant business. His spinnerets were turgid, his aspect was determined, and steadily and slowly he commenced to make a web. Now and then the fly took

a walk and broke through a strand or two. They stuck to his legs, and annoyed him. With a little difficulty the films were got rid of, but consternation began to seize the fly's mind, and he resolved to move from the scene of operations. He took up his quarters on the muslin which covered the neck of the jar.

Next morning, the fly's head hung like a Bulgarian atrocity in the web, his body lay at the mouth of the spider's den. During the night, Esau had made a cavern of cobweb.

It is the duty of the historian to adhere to the truth, even if it casts a slur on his favorite theories, and blasts his reputation as an observer.

Esau was not a male: he was a lady.

One day, while feeding the beast, I noticed that the den in the corner had been extended into a passage with two openings, and in the passage wall was a spot thicker and more opaque than the rest of the building. This I surmised was a deposit of eggs, and I afterwards found that I was right.

Still, I had named the animal; and, on the principle of the parson who insisted on christening the little girl John, I adhered to the original appellation. Hitherto the spider had discovered none of the attributes proverbial to her sex, and I did not feel justified in naming her Lucy or Maria.

There were warm days that year, when the air smelt of clover, and flies came out plentifully, and Esau was fed on all available insects that had wings. The house-fly was her staple food, although she regarded small moths as delicacies, and thought midges and small gnats were toothsome articles of diet; but her soul loathed bluebottles. They were to her what caviare and absinthe are to the uneducated. If a bluebottle was put into her net, she bound it down with many strands of cobweb, and killed it, and before the animal had ceased to quiver, cast it from her web with evident repugnance. Beetles she did not care for, as they broke her web; but money-spinners she tolerated. Daddy-long-legs fell an easy prey to her, although she did not relish them. That I know, because she never took their carcasses to her cave.

By way of a treat, I once offered her a small earthworm. It wriggled and writhed, lengthened itself and shortened itself, assumed the shape of a cork-screw, and tied itself up into knots. Esau sought refuge in her house, and stuck her head out to watch these strange manoeuvres.

At first, she was as still as possible; then there was an oscillatory movement of the palpi. She generally did that when she was getting up her pluck. Then she made a rapid rush to within an inch of the worm, and reconnoitred again. She was not satisfied, and retired a second time to think the matter out. The worm, in the mean time, either got tired of struggling, or else philosophically arrived at the conclusion that he could make himself as comfortable in a cobweb as in any other place. The period of rest was fatal. Esau darted on her prey and stuck her mandibles into him. Vainly did the worm try to charm the enemy by tickling her with the end of his tail. Esau held on like a vice. The worm tried to encircle her body with furtive gyrations. Esau had no inclination to play at Laocoon, and eluded the strategy of his prey. That worm gave in.

I began to get tired of my pet. She was getting fat; and the fatter she grew, the more ferocious she became. I sought another spider, and found one smaller than the one I possessed. To my mind it was of the same species, but from its size I imagined it was a male. "I will be the historian of the loves of spiders," I said. "Their domestic happiness shall be a moral to mankind. Two spiders together will give me an opportunity of making fresh observations."

I was not disappointed, but my researches gave a result that I had not anticipated.

When I put my finger near the new spider he gathered his legs together, and assumed an abject attitude; perhaps it was a simulation of death. Anyway, the position gave me the idea of meanness and knavery; so I called him Uriah Heep, because he was "so 'umble."

"Esau," I said, with befitting solemnity, "wilt thou take Uriah to be thy wedded husband?" I dropped him into the jar. The lady was sitting in her web; but she bolted into her chamber the moment she felt the impulse of the fresh arrival.

"Ah," thought I, "she is parading her coyness."

Uriah did not seem at his ease, and, leaving the cobweb, he took up a position between the paper and the wall of the jar. Esau protruded what ought to have been her nose — had she belonged to a higher species — from the doorway of her sanctum. There was evident uneasiness on both sides.

Now, I do not believe that these two

creatures slept for two days and two nights. They regarded each other with profound suspicion. I put flies into the jar. They would not be allured by food. If one moved the twentieth part of an inch, the other altered its attitude to a similar degree. If Esau wished to get out of her apartment, Uriah occupied a different strategical position. It was a period of brain-tension, watchfulness, and terror.

On the third morning I found Uriah had fallen a victim. His thorax was separated from his abdomen, his legs were disarticulated and scattered, and Esau sat on her perch, placid and contented, the mistress of the situation.

Spiders of both sexes and of every shade of opinion successively shared the captivity of Esau, and they all shared the fate of Uriah. The blood of Mr. Heep had whetted the appetite of the Amazon, and she increased in valor and ferocity. She gauged the strength of her opponent with infallible precision. Now she would use all the arts of strategy; now she would trust to the prestige of victorious arms. Her jar became a very charnel-house of the remains of her kind. A battle occasionally took place, but superior strength and agility made Esau victress. As a rule, however, the new intruder said Kismet the moment it was seized, and resigned itself to fate.

I have yet to relate the most interesting part of my narrative. Pardon me whispering, reader; but Esau has yet to become a mother. The queen of the pickle-jar, who directed the destinies of her subjects — and I must say she directed them in pretty much the same direction — was herself to become the slave of a numerous progeny. It has been an enigma to me who the sire of that progeny could have been.

"No scandal against Queen Elizabeth, I hope?"

Reader, I assure you, my duties are those of a grave historian. I am no carrier of tattle.

It has been an enigma to me (allow me to resume the subject) who the sire of that progeny could have been. Perhaps it was some spider of ancient lineage, who did valiant battle in his ancestral cobwebs against predatory wasps. Perhaps he had won Esau's young affections, and become master of her charms. Perhaps it was some errant knight, who had vowed the extermination of the whole race of parasites which infest the spider's body. Perhaps it was some wealthy spi-

der, who owned vast demesnes of netting, which extended over many a rafter, and offered hunting-ground for many a retainer. Perhaps her spouse was remarkable for his personal beauty, and had carried off her heart by his comeliness. I know that no spider base-born could have been the father of her offspring. Her behavior to Uriah Heep forbids so gross a surmial.

Then, how was it that she was alone on the hat-peg? The aristocrat might have spurned her from his home from the prospect of a more advantageous alliance. The enthusiast might have doubted her intensity, and so deserted her. Dives might have been jealous, and have procured an act of separation; Adonis probably spirited away by some light of love.

Her history is open to conjecture alone. The fact remains, that she laid eggs, and they were hatched.

If my memory be not deceived, the small spiders appeared a fortnight or three weeks after I first noticed the eggs. When first born, they were small, yellowy-white, and indefinite, like cheese-mites — just what one would imagine spider babydom to be. They moved at a pace almost imperceptible from its slowness, and their gait was weak and vacillating. As well as I could make out with the naked eye, they were constantly tumbling on their sides for the first few days. They seemed to meet with obstacles which are not apparent to our gross vision.

I thought the sun would be grateful to them, and their jar was placed on the window-sill. Either the warmth suited them, or baby spiders gain strength rapidly; for before three days were over, Esau's offspring became marvels of agility. When they were at one end of the piece of paper, urgent business called them to the opposite extremity of the cone, and they ran as fast as their small legs could carry them. If they were on the floor of their home, urgent reasons induced them to promenade the ceiling. Occasionally one little chap would take a long journey around the floor of the jar, while another would start off on a commission of inquiry, and investigate the construction of the cobweb with the minutest care. A third would mount its mother's back, and crawl over her out of sheer curiosity. No pair of them ever seemed to do the same thing at the same

time. I never saw them feed; but during the next week or two they increased in size and strength. Esau contemplated them with pleasure; her character was softened. Dozens of flies were put into the jar, but few were killed. Some became entangled and died in the toils, but the majority occupied the top of the jar, and especially affected the muslin doorway, which was moistened for their delectation with sugar and water.

The time for my summer holidays arrived, and I started for the south, leaving Esau to look after the house.

The friendship I had struck up with spiders certainly increased the pleasure of my trip. I found my friends in numbers everywhere I went. They were on the shady side of dock-leaves. They floated in the air and settled on my hat, and were carried off by the next breath of breeze. I found their webs in profusion between the branches of a monkey-tree in the garden; and in the cornfields myriads of these small creatures trapped flies that were almost microscopic. On the sandy slopes of the seashore, cobwebs were among the gorse-bushes. The diadem spiders in the rose-trees vied with each other in the regularity of their nets, and every barn was rich in arachnean architecture. I had heard of water-spiders, and I hunted for them assiduously in every pool and stream in the neighborhood, but with no success. I found no water-spiders, but I became the possessor of many inhabitants of the ponds.

Three weeks passed too quickly, and I had to return to my work and to Esau. Alas! what a lamentable sight met my eyes! Esau was dead, and her children were certainly fatter than when I left. I could arrive at but one conclusion. The dauntless adventuress who had gloried in murder and fratricide had become the victim of misplaced love. Those little wretches whom she had brought into the world, and cared for and nurtured, had turned upon her and slain her and sucked her life-blood. Ah, poor mother, thy antecedents might not have been good! Possibly thou mightest have dined off thy husband or thy paramour — certainly thou hast waged unnatural though valiant war against thy kind; still, that was no reason why thou shouldst have been sacrificed by thy offspring in the bloom of thy maturity.

W. H. T. WINTER.

From Temple Bar.

ROBIN.

BY MRS. PARR, AUTHOR OF "ADAM AND EVE."

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN Mr. Blunt and Christopher returned late that evening, it was to hear from the servants that Mrs. Blunt had not felt well, she had gone out into the grounds during the morning, but since her return she had kept her room.

"Best send for Heywood at once," said Mr. Blunt fussily.

Christopher begged him to wait until he had been up and seen Robin, and a few minutes later, he reappeared to say that she felt better now she had been lying down. She complained of headache, but would try and eat some dinner.

"Why, you're looking as white as a ghost," was Mr. Blunt's salutation, cheerily spoken, as if the sight of her pale face gave him immense satisfaction.

"You haven't been over-fatiguing yourself now while we've been away, have you? 'cos that'll never do."

Robin hastened to disown the supposition.

"I only walked a very little way," she said; "I didn't go out of the gates at all, so it couldn't be that."

"I'm very glad you didn't; you might have chanced on that Chandos, perhaps, swaggering about."

Jack's manner of ignoring them, and avoiding, as Mr. Blunt thought, an introduction to Christopher, had rankled within him all day.

"He's no gentleman that, I say, or when he met us he wouldn't have acted as he did."

"Very likely he felt it a little awkward," put in Christopher, "and the carriage passed so quickly by that there was really no need for his speaking."

"How d'ye mean no need? Miss Georgy could speak, why couldn't he? You haven't done nothing to offend him."

Mr. Blunt, not in the best of humors, was glad of something to let off steam about. He had been in a state of ferment all day, for under the plea of other business, Christopher had made this the opportunity of asking his father what, now he was married, he thought of doing for him. He considered he ought to have a separate income, and—at best a poor diplomatist—at once discovered his motive by saying he wished it on account of Robin, so that in case anything happened

to him she would have an independence settled upon her.

"Independence! what, you mean something independent of me?" asked the wary father.

"Exactly so," said the simple son. Upon which Mr. Blunt desired that he might be informed of the exact requirements demanded of him, advising that the sum should be talked over with Robin, and reserving to himself until then to give his answer.

All day long the proposition haunted him. Up to this time Christopher had never dropped a hint of needing such an arrangement. In his own case he had been contented with what his father gave him and the interest—about £200 a year—of some house property which a distant relation of his mother's had left to him.

Could Robin have put him up to make this demand? Seeing it was to be settled on herself, Mr. Blunt thought it not unlikely. Several times leading up to the question, he had beaten the bush to try and get the truth from Christopher, but his son evidently did not understand him, and feeling it would be unwise to ask the direct question, Mr. Blunt had been compelled to swallow his curiosity. To a man so dispositioned this acted irritably on his temper, and he was in a mood to find fault when the sight of Robin's evident indisposition turned his thoughts to another channel; but though for her sake he might spare those present, there was no occasion to hold his tongue about the squire, and he continued to rake up the dispute about the thicket, what he had not said to him, and what he should like to say to him, until Christopher, noting Robin's face grow paler and that she sat quite silent, said in hopes of silencing him,—

"Oh, well, never mind now, it won't matter in the least what you think of him or he thinks of you. I saw Cameron in at Topham's, and he told me that Mr. Chandos went off by the 6.40 train, he saw him down at the station, he was going to try and get the night train from London. I don't know what night train nor where he was going, but to some place abroad at a long distance, and how long he may stay or when he will return seemed quite uncertain."

Mr. Blunt said something to express his satisfaction, but what, Christopher did not heed. The alteration in Robin's face had attracted his attention.

"What is the matter, Robin?"

He got up and went towards her.

"You're not feeling well; what is it, tell me?"

Seized with a mad desire to push him away, Robin had to make an effort of control.

"I don't know," and she gave a ghastly smile. "I felt so much better when I came down. I think it's the smell of the dinner must have upset me."

"That's it," said Mr. Blunt confidentially; "it often does so, my dear, it's turned you sick I dare say."

"Yes," said Robin, catching at any excuse for going away.

"I shall have to go back to my own room again, only, Christopher, don't you come." Her voice sounded quite sharply. "Jennings is up-stairs, she will attend to me."

A little hurt, Christopher lacked the assurance to follow her, he fancied she spoke as if she did not wish him to come. He went as far as the foot of the stairs, watched that she ran quickly up, and then returned to the dinner-table.

"I hope there is nothing the matter with her," he said anxiously.

"And I hope there is," said his father pointedly. "So there's the difference between me and you," and then he emptied his glass as if drinking a health, smacked his lips, and had it filled again. "We'll go to-morrow and get Heywood to drop in as he's passing here, just to make a call: he needn't say nothing."

"Oh no, there'll be no occasion for that."

Christopher spoke hastily, he was frightened to death of what Robin might feel.

"It's not likely to be anything but a headache, which I dare say will pass off by the morning; if it should not I'll ask her what she would like me to do."

The presence of the servants restrained Mr. Blunt from indulging in the outburst to which he would have liked to treat his son. Leaning back in his chair he swelled out his portly person and made a continuous chirrup with his lips, as was his wont when imploring a sympathetic providence to grant him patience.

All his thoughts, his hopes, his wishes were centred now in the desire that he should speedily see children born to Christopher, heirs who would relieve him of that terrible anxiety he always suffered whenever anything ailed his son.

The prospect of a fine sturdy boy to dandle on his knee softened his heart, and he spent the evening in building castles, arranging his affairs, and drink-

ing a great deal more hot grog than was good for him.

Robin during this time was going through all those torments we endure when our doubts and fears are turned to certainties. Until those casual words dropped by Christopher about Jack's departure, the poor heart had not known how desperately it had clung to the hope of his remaining.

Even while she had continued to say to herself, "He will go, we shall not meet again," the certainty that he would remain contradicted her.

Now he was gone — gone for years — perhaps forever. Oh, she had so counted on his presence, together they could bring back those dear departed days, together live them over again. With Jack she could open her heart freely, speak of her father, ask counsel about Christopher, give vent to the repugnance she felt creeping over her towards Mr. Blunt.

During the weary months that followed on their last separation, Robin had well schooled herself in the certainty that, in the way she had wanted, Jack could not care for her; very tenderly and humbly she had sought to strangle the love he had called into being, and believing it to be dead she had buried it in a grave which she had long kept green by watering it with her tears. Sorrow, altered circumstances, fresh surroundings, all had combined to distract her, so that when she found herself brought face to face with Jack, it was the friend she gave welcome to, the old companion of her early years, without any embarrassment that she had ever made him her lover.

To Jack's manner was due the ranking which she now felt, mingled with her suffering — his tone, his look, the words he had let drop, had all fallen as seeds of discontent amid what had been hitherto satisfaction — the drop of honey in her cup of gall had been a certain self-complacency, that although it had proved of no avail, she had sacrificed herself to the utmost. Suddenly this sweetness had lost its flavor, and she was racking herself with questions of why had she married at all? Why had Christopher been thrown in her way? Why had she not written to Jack? Suppose she had. What now? The sigh that came from Robin seemed to rend her breast.

"Did you speak — say anything?" Christopher had crept softly in, and had remained sitting out of sight.

What! A fear clutched her — could she have spoken aloud! She opened her

eyes and started up. "Oh Christopher, I wish you wouldn't come and frighten me so," she said, petulantly turning herself away from him.

"Dear, I have been here ever so long; only before you lay so quiet, that when I heard you move and sigh, I thought you were awake perhaps and wanted something."

"No," Robin could command her actions better than her words; she stretched out her hand to him, "only to be left quiet," she added.

"Do you mind me sitting here?"

"I'd rather you went away."

Christopher turned to go.

Robin was stirred by compunction.

"Christopher, you don't think me unkind, do you? I don't want to be."

"Unkind! No, why should I think you unkind? Because you don't want to be fidgetted by me, for fidgetty I am and always shall be, I fear, whenever the slightest thing is the matter with you—the toll we pay for love is anxiety."

"But there is nothing to be anxious about. I am not ill. I haven't anything the matter with me."

"Nothing the matter! and you lying here, that is not like my Robin, I am sure."

The words were so tenderly spoken that they dropped like dew on Robin's fevered heart. Should she tell him? tell him all. Confide in him about Jack, of her meeting with him, and who he had proved to be?

She hesitated, a something which she would not own, which she resolutely turned away from, rose unbidden and held her back. She knew that she might trust Christopher, that he was worthy of her confidence; it was not that which stopped her, it was something in herself, still, after all, perhaps . . . The opportunity was gone.

Christopher, recalling what she had said, pressed her hand with his lips, and before she had fully made up her mind what she would do, he turned away and went out of the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ROBIN'S appearance at breakfast the next morning, recovered and her usual self, disowning any remaining trace of indisposition, and laughing at the bare idea of having a doctor to see her, did not tend to improve the bad temper in which Mr. Blunt had arisen. Possibly the reaction from his self-indulgence of the night before had something to do with his

state; when he went to bed his castles were stories high, he had awakened with a sense that they were crumbling, and now he saw them shattered and laid low. Added to this, Sunday was a day which always tried him, its minutes seemed to drag themselves out to hours, and he was glad of any prospect which offered some change to the routine of church-going, in which the example set by his neighbors had to be followed.

He had intended that Dr. Heywood should have been asked to pay his call at luncheon-time, this would have insured his hearing all the gossip for twenty miles round, and on his part he had arranged what he would say regarding Mr. Chandos, about whom now he would no longer keep silent; he should tell the doctor that he was free to repeat his words to anybody, and by this means he fancied it not impossible that they might reach the ears of the squire himself.

As is usually the case when cheerfulness is the result of effort, Robin's spirits seemed unusually high, and this in itself aggravated Mr. Blunt and made him resentful towards her. The suspicion concerning that money transaction came back with renewed force, he felt perfectly convinced that she had "put Christopher up to it," and he cautioned himself to be on his guard, and keep tight hold of the purse-strings, for fear that by independence his authority might be slackened. Christopher dead, Robin left with children, unless he kept some hold over her, who could say how she might treat him? "No, no," it was very well now all was fine-weather sailing, but he hadn't forgotten to whom she belonged, nor how that who had served him, and he raked among his recollections in search of bygone slights and injuries, banking up his ill-humor and setting it smouldering.

Unfortunately familiar with the look upon his father's face, Christopher, noting the impatience of his movements and the surly tone of his voice, felt particularly uneasy.

Up to the present time Robin had seen nothing of his ill temper, and whatever rough speech he had indulged in had never for a moment rested on her; but this morning she evidently did not please him—his tea was too sweet, he had it thrown away; in the next cup given him, she put too much milk; in each remark she made—and poor soul, what an effort it cost her to make one!—he found something to contradict, until, with that unlucky fate which generally leads persons

at cross-purposes to touch on some sore subject, Robin, reminded by something Christopher said of Sundays abroad, referred to a particular one which they had all spent in Venice together. Since she had seen Jack, her father had been so in her thoughts that his name—seldom mentioned by her before Mr. Blunt—slipped out inadvertently.

Christopher, plunging into a long-winded, roundabout reply, hoped that his father was not going to notice it. Illusory supposition! Mr. Blunt had been itching for something to be dropped that he could catch up and be offensive about.

His state was by no means singular—in Wadpole that very morning a finger might have been placed on a good score of persons, old and young of both sexes, who to their own torment, and the torment of their families, felt themselves in a similar disposition; but among them all not one labored under the disadvantages which beset Mr. Blunt; from whom, the moment his good-humor forsook him, the thin veneering of social polish vanished completely, and you saw the man as nature had left him, coarse, rough, bullying, with no comprehension of any of those finer feelings, about which he himself knew nothing.

A great many of the wounds he gave he had no idea of giving; and he prided himself on forgetting the injuries he received far sooner than those who had injured him forgave the rebuffs he gave them.

Only waiting till Christopher had so far delivered himself that he might feel certain of commanding Robin's undivided attention, Mr. Blunt gave vent to a succession of snorts intended by him as a laugh, but which might be taken for anything indicating contempt and derision.

"That's good," he said, "about Sundays; he must have precious altered before church-going was anything in your father's way." The sneering tone and manner, more than the words, made Robin's cheeks scarlet; for a moment she was silent; about her father caring to go to church there was nothing she could say. How often, since Christopher had talked to her, had she lamented that she had not been more persistent in her urging! It was true that at times she had asked him to go with her, but when he declined she was quite content that he should stay away; Jack didn't go, why should *he*? In those days Jack had been Robin's standard of morality and consistency.

"He never interfered with me though, papa didn't," she said, looking up in reply to Mr. Blunt. "When I was old enough to do as I liked, and I could go, I always went to church every Sunday, more especially latterly," and in an instant her memory had travelled back, and she saw herself setting off to go, because perhaps God would listen to her there, would hear her prayers better, would spare her father to her.

A burst of tears followed on her words.

"Robin! Robin!"

Christopher was beside her.

"It's because it made me think of him," she sobbed, "and how I used to hope he would get better."

Christopher passed his hand tenderly over the bent head, trying to soothe her. He knew how uncontrollably these bursts of sorrow came, and how bravely she tried to subdue them. Already she was wiping their traces away.

Mr. Blunt, for the moment taken aback, now gave vent to a most lugubrious sigh. "If you're going to give way to the habit of every time anything's spoken, of treating us to a set-out of tears, Robin, it's best for you to know that I for one can't stand it; I never could in my life, and I ain't going to begin now. It's what I never was accustomed to—crying in females, more particularly when there's nothing to cry for. It's true you may have lost your father, but that's in a course of nature. Everybody, if they live to, sooner or later, must some time or 'nother lose their fathers."

"Well, of course she knows that," said Christopher, "although what difference it makes I can't see. It's only very natural that she should sorrow for him, seeing how devoted they were to each other."

Mr. Blunt laughed offensively.

"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose it's the right way: spend every farthing you can lay your hand to; beggar your wife, leave your daughter dependent on charity, and you'll be lamented as the best father that ever was. It's something new to me, though, and I'd hoped my daughter-in-law would have showed more sense than to try and teach me the lesson. I'm willing enough to let bygones be bygones. I don't want to rake up the past, nor to have names mentioned that I never speak of—only, if they are, don't treat me to a scene which leads to a regular upset," and jumping up, he pushed back his chair violently, seemed as if he was going out of the room, altered his mind, and came back again.

Perhaps he was expecting that she would say something. Robin tried to stifle her sense of injury. Her eyes, dry of tears now, were opened to the full, bright and sparkling: a spot of color had come out on either cheek; she held her head more than usually erect, and her voice, when she spoke, was high-toned.

"I am sorry if I have made you at all uncomfortable, uncle," she said, addressing him. "I will take care it does not happen again; but to speak, as you have just done, of my father to me, is not kind of you."

"Oh, indeed, isn't it?" said Mr. Blunt surlily. "Well, I'm the best judge of that."

"No, I don't think you are. I cannot suppose that you knew how much it would wound me, or I don't believe that you would have said it."

"I tell you what it is, young lady: you know very little about what's happened between your father and me, so the less you take me to task about it the better we two shall get on together."

His wrath was beginning to increase. Christopher, dreading a further display of it, hastened to be peacemaker.

"Come, come, father," he said; "let us say no more about the matter. I am sure you must see that Robin had no thought of vexing you any more than you wished to wound her. So let's forget all about it."

But, quick to note, Mr. Blunt saw that as he spoke he took Robin by the hand, an evidence, to his mind, that he sided with her.

"Two against one," he thought; "and that's what it will be in future if I don't put down my foot upon it," so assuming more displeasure than he positively felt, he said,—

"Easier said than done, at my time of life. You must, both of you, try and keep it in mind that I'm master of this house, and therefore expect to be a little studied."

"Well, I hope you have had no reason to complain of that so far," said Christopher. "I'm sure Robin has entirely devoted herself to you."

"Oh, dear, bless my heart, I don't want her to make a trial of what there's plenty as good as she, and better too, would look upon as a pleasure. There must be a fat lot to complain of in eating and drinking of the best, having a carriage to ride in, and not being asked to soil a finger, especially to one who's been so very much used to that sort o' thing as she has."

It was Christopher's face that grew scarlet. A glance at him showed Robin how his father's words were paining him. In a moment she had gone over to where the old man stood, and stretching out her hands to him, "Uncle," she said, "you know that is not what Christopher means. He knows — and I know, too — how very kind you have been to me, and if I have in any way said anything to offend you, forgive it; only — only when — when you speak of my father" — her rising tears began to choke her, and unable to stem the torrent, she ran out of the room, leaving the father and son alone.

From The Cornhill Magazine.
A FRENCH ASSIZE.

I.

THE entrance of two judges into an English assize town is, weather favoring, an impressive sight; or at least it can be made so. It is not often that a sheriff evinces his parsimony after the manner of a certain official of that rank, who went out to receive Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in a hansom cab, and was straightway fined 500*l.* for his impudence. Most sheriffs are anxious to acquit themselves creditably of the task which the law imposes upon them, and some would no doubt go to extremes in the matter of pageantry had not an etiquette arisen which informally regulates to what extent the ceremonial of receiving the judges shall go. The judges must have fine carriages with four horses, servants in livery, javelin-men; a comfortable house to lodge in, and the sheriff, who houses and feeds them at his own expense, must attend them into court daily attired in uniform. If the calendar at the assizes be a heavy one, the sheriff's expenses in entertaining the judges for several days must often be considerable. In France, where the calendars are always heavy, the assize judges have not only to defray all their own expenses, but they are expected to give at least one dinner to the local officials. By way of indemnity they receive from the State a fee of five hundred francs, or 20*l.* The regular salaries of these assize judges, who are councillors of the District Court of Appeal, specially commissioned, vary between 240*l.* and 360*l.*; but never exceed this last figure.

This is only another way of saying that French judges are as a rule men of private means who have accepted judicial

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office for the honor of the thing. The republican party now in power have resolved to effect a radical reform in the judicature, and to bestow the highest offices on the bench, as they are conferred in England, on successful barristers whom they will attract by the offer of salaries twice and three times larger than those now paid. Thus it is proposed to give councillors of appeal courts (whose numbers will be diminished) from 600*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year, and presidents of appeal courts from 1,200*l.* to 2,000*l.*; under the new system also, should it ever come into force, the judges of assize will have all their expenses paid for them and receive a fee of 4*l.* a day into the bargain. These reforms must altogether change the organization of the French judicature; but speaking of French judges as they are now, one must say of them that, if not always intellectually brilliant, they are without exception a highly dignified, honorable, and well-trained body of men. Those of them who are commissioned to hold assizes have generally sat for many years on the bench. They belong in most cases to the provincial *noblesse* and commenced their career in the *magistrature assize*, at the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven, by being appointed assistant judges in the tribunals of correctional police; after which they became assessors in those tribunals, *juges d'instruction* (examining magistrates), and finally councillors of a court of appeal. There are twenty-one of these appeal courts, formerly called royal or imperial courts, and the staff of each includes a president and an indefinite number of councillors. Some courts have but six or eight councillors, others more than twenty. A councillorship is the supreme dignity to which a judge can claim to rise by length of service, though by government favor he may be promoted to the higher functions of president of a court, or councillor of the Court of Cassation in Paris. The presidentships, however, are very often conferred on the most distinguished members of the *magistrature debout*, the procurator general, or chief public prosecutor of appeal courts; and it may be mentioned that councillors seldom care to accept these high posts unless they are quite rich men. The president of a *cour d'appel* gets 600*l.* a year, but he is required to keep up so much state and to give so many dinners and parties that he spends his salary two or three times over. The councillorships of the Court of Cassation, which involve a residence in Paris,

are likewise sought only by the most affluent. As for the highest judicial office of all, that of president of the Court of Cassation or supreme court of civil and criminal appeal, the salary is 1,200*l.*; but the holder of this most venerated office has to pay for his dignity on a scale which only an income of several thousands of pounds will suffice to meet.

Assizes are held twice, or if needful three times a year, in the chief towns of each department, and three councillors of the district *cour d'appel* are commissioned to hold them. The senior councillor takes the temporary title of president of the assizes, and on him devolve all the principal duties, ceremonial and other. The judges arrive in the town without any display, but as soon as they have alighted at the chief hotel in the place they must begin paying their official visits in a carriage and pair. They are bound to call first on the prefect, on the commander of the garrison if he be a general of division, and on the diocesan if he be an archbishop, and the visits in such cases must be paid in their scarlet robes. If, however, the garrison commander be a general of brigade, and the diocesan only a bishop, the assize president and his assessors return to their hotel after calling on the prefect, for they rank higher for the nonce than all other officials, and are entitled to receive first visits from them. The prefect, accompanied by his secretary and the councillors of *préfecture*, all in full uniform, speedily arrives at the hotel to pay his return visit, and after him come, in what order they please, the general, the bishop, the mayor of the town, the president, assessor, and public prosecutor of the local tribunal, the central commissioner of police, and divers other functionaries. They make but a short stay, and as soon as they are gone the judges divest themselves of their robes, and set out to pay their return visits in evening dress. The etiquette in all these points is strictly defined. It was originally regulated by Napoleon, and has been adhered to with but little variation ever since. At times attempts have been made to condense the whole formality into a mere exchange of cards; but the French love ceremony, and of late the secret antagonism between aristocratic judges and the republican government has induced republican prefects to stickle most punctiliously for the observance of all official courtesies due towards them. Not long ago an assize president who was by birth a marquis called upon a prefect, and made

him the stiffest of bows, saying, "Sir, I have come to pay you the visit which the law requires." The prefect was a good fellow, and returning the call an hour afterwards, said with the blandest of smiles, "Sir, I come to pay a visit which in some cases might be a mere duty, but which in this instance is a real pleasure." The interviews between judges and bishops are generally more genial than this.

While the judges have been getting through their visits, the *avocat général* appointed to act as public prosecutor at the assizes has also been exchanging civilities with the local authorities; but in his case card-leaving is held to be sufficient. The *avocat général* is one of the assistants of the *procureur général* or chief public prosecutor of the district over which the appeal court has jurisdiction. He sits in the assize court in red robes, and conducts the prosecution of all the prisoners: it is only in cases where private prosecutors want to get pecuniary damages out of a prisoner, besides seeing him punished according to law, that they are represented by counsel of their own. They are then said to constitute themselves civil parties to the suit. They may do this even when a prisoner is on his trial for murder, and indeed pecuniary damages are almost always claimed when a prisoner is supposed to be able to pay them. It has not unfrequently happened that a murderer, besides being sentenced to death, has been made to pay a heavy fine to the relations of his victim. These fines are inflicted, not by the jury, but by the bench. A few years ago a gentleman named Armand, of Bordeaux, was put upon his trial for trying to murder his servant, Maurice Roux. The jury acquitted him, but the bench, having their doubts about the matter, sentenced him to pay twenty thousand francs damages to Roux, and the Court of Cassation upheld this curious decision. Prince Pierre Bonaparte, when acquitted of the murder of Victor Noir, the journalist, in 1870, was also made to pay twenty thousand francs damages to his victim's mother; and only a few months since a country gentleman, who was convicted of having killed an antagonist in a duel, was sentenced to pay 4,000*l.* compensation to the deceased's widow, in addition to undergoing a year's imprisonment, and paying a fine of 40*l.* to the State with all the costs of the trial.

II.

FRENCH assizes are only held to try criminal causes. All civil suits are heard

at the courts of appeal, which are stationary, and whose presidents never figure in assize commissions. When a calendar is unusually heavy, the judges arrive two or three days before the proceedings commence; but in any case they come one clear day beforehand, in order that they may have ample time to examine the *dossiers* of all the causes. This is always done with the utmost care. The *dossier* is a compilation which includes not only the indictment and the depositions of witnesses before the examining magistrate, but all the facts and rumors which the police have been able to collect concerning the antecedents of the accused. A copy of each *dossier* handed to the judges is laid before the *chambre des mises en accusation*, which performs the same functions as an English grand jury. The members composing it are specially delegated judges or magistrates of a lower rank than councillors, and it rests with them to determine whether prisoners shall be put upon their trial. They are not limited, however, to the two alternatives of finding a true bill or ignoring the bill altogether. They may order a *supplément d'instruction*, that is, send back the case to the examining magistrate for further inquiry. It is the main principle of French procedure that a case should come up to a criminal court complete in all its details, and this throws upon examining magistrates an amount of labor and responsibility almost incredible.

Four categories of offences are tried at the assizes: firstly, crimes involving sentences of death or penal servitude; secondly, political offences; thirdly, by the Act of 1831, press offences; and fourthly, manslaughters caused by duelling. The offenders in the last three categories are generally, though not always, treated with courtesy. They have been at large on their own recognisances; they are not required to surrender themselves into actual custody, and they do not sit in the dock during trial. All other offenders, however, even when they have been admitted to bail, must surrender at the house of detention on the day before the assizes open, and must be brought up in custody. It is the public prosecutor, and not the bench, who decides to what extent accused persons shall be enlarged before and during trial. He may if he pleases keep a political offender or a journalist or duellist as strictly confined before trial as an ordinary felon; and he may at his discretion stay the execution

of a sentence, and allow the convicted man to walk freely out of court. Political offenders, journalists, and duellists, who get sentenced to a few months' imprisonment only, are seldom detained immediately after their conviction. Except in very serious cases, or in cases where the government harbors a special animosity against the culprit, the latter leaves the court free, and does not surrender to undergo his punishment until he receives a summons to do so from the public prosecutor. And sometimes, as for instance when a sudden change of ministry brings the friends of a political offender to power, the summons is never sent at all. It may be remembered that during the last days of the Duke de Broglie's administration in 1877, M. Gambetta was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for an attack on Marshal MacMahon, but the order to surrender was never communicated to him.

The first business of the assizes is to draw the juries. A panel of forty jurymen is summoned, and the prisoners are all brought up one by one into the president's room to see the drawing done. For each trial fourteen names are drawn by lot, that is, twelve to form the jury and two others to act as *suppléants* in case one of the jury should fall ill. These *suppléants* are sworn like the rest, and they sit in the jury box, but take no part in finding the verdict unless they are required to fill up vacancies. This system of having a couple of extra men on a jury is evidently more sensible than the English plan of empaneling just the number needed. How absurd this system would have seemed if one of the jury in the Tichborne case had died on the one hundred and fiftieth day of the trial, thereby rendering it necessary that the whole trial should be recommenced! In France, if a trial bade fair to last a hundred days, it is probable that the bench would order six *suppléants* to be empaneled in order to guard against all chance of a miscarriage of justice.

Every prisoner is attended at the drawing by his counsel, and it is a merciful provision of French law that no prisoner shall be arraigned at the assizes without having a barrister to defend him. A few days before the assizes a notice is sent to the house of detention requesting that all prisoners unable to pay for counsel shall forward their applications to be defended at the expense of the State; and the judges appoint a counsel for each prisoner as soon as they have taken cog-

nizance of the *dossiers*. The *avocat* may not always be of much use to a prisoner, but there he is, and he seldom fails to exercise his privilege of challenging some of the names called for the jury. This is done by merely lifting up his *toque* or headress when the name is called. The public prosecutor may also challenge, and challenges coming from either side are always allowed without question.

The administration of justice in France is never rendered undignified by sordid surroundings, such as small, frowsty courts. All the courts of assize are spacious and handsome; there is plenty of room for all who have business there, and it is always possible to accommodate a good many sight-seers. The public prosecutor sits in a rostrum to right or left of the bench according to the position of the windows, the dock being always opposite the light so that the prosecutor may enjoy a full view of the prisoner's face. The three judges in their robes of scarlet and ermine sit in armchairs at a long table on a dais. Behind them hangs a life-size painting of the Saviour on the cross, and there is a crucifix on the table fronting the president's chair. These emblems of mercy and redemption form part of the furniture of all assize courts. No freethinking judge has yet ordered their removal, though judges must be pretty well tired by this time of hearing young *avocats* adjure them by the crucifix not to slay the innocent. This is a piece of rhetorical flourish which may have been effective sometimes, but it has been sadly overdone and misused.

III.

"BRING in the accused," says the president, as soon as the judges have taken their seats; and the prisoner is introduced into the dock between a couple of gendarmes heavily armed, who sit on either side of him and keep their cocked hats on throughout the proceedings. From this time and until the end of the trial it may occur to the prisoner to wonder why three judges have been put to the trouble of trying him, seeing that it is the president who does all the work. It is said that the two assessors have a voice in the infliction of the sentence, but they take no ostensible part in the trial, and sit all the while as dumb as fish. The president, on the contrary, has a great deal both to say and to do.

The procedure of the French assize court differs totally from the English. The proceedings commence with the read-

ing of the indictment in a sing-song voice by the clerk of the court, and this usually lasts more than an hour, for the indictment is of portentous length, touching upon almost every incident in the accused's life. The prisoner, who remains seated during this reading, is then told to stand up, and the president begins to interrogate him. Now the bias of French judges against accused persons is always so strong as to have become proverbial, and any Englishman hearing a judicial interrogatory is shocked by perceiving that the president speaks as if the prisoner's guilt had already been made manifest. He says to him, "Now don't deny your guilt. Don't equivocate. You know very well that you are telling lies. You seem to have been a bad character from your youth up;" and so on. This kind of thing quite unsettles a nervous person, or makes a bold one saucy, and it produces a bad effect on juries. It is a marvel that judges should not yet have discovered how bad an effect it produces. Many of the scandalously lenient verdicts which have disgraced French courts of justice of late years may be ascribed entirely to the irritation caused in the minds of jurymen by the bullying tone adopted by judges towards prisoners. A wretched man driven to exasperation one day exclaimed: "You are not judging my cause; you have made up your mind about it without hearing me. What is the use of my answering you?" and he was acquitted for this speech, though in truth he was guilty. A judge who believes in a prisoner's guilt and wants to see him punished cannot do better than speak to him in the most moderate tone, as the jury will probably do their duty if their vanity is not ruffled by the feeling that they are being cowed. By an act passed in 1880 the summing up of judges was abolished. This act may be said to have been a very severe vote of censure passed by the Parliament upon the judiciary, and it ought to have had a sobering and somewhat humiliating effect upon presidents of assize. But it has apparently had none. The truth is, judges come into court with their minds utterly saturated with the facts accumulated in most cleverly drawn indictments, and it should be added that the preliminary investigations conducted before the examining magistrates are generally so long, so minute, and painstaking that it is very seldom indeed that an innocent man is committed for trial. Innocent men frequently remain for months and months in gaol

while the charge against them is being investigated by examining magistrates; but as it is the *juge d'instruction's* business to frame a perfect indictment, and not merely to establish a *prima facie* case, he will end by discharging a prisoner if not fully satisfied of his guilt, sooner than risk a snub from the *chambre des mises en accusation* by sending up an incomplete case. Nevertheless innocent men do get committed and convicted sometimes in France; and rare as such occurrences may be, they ought, one would think, to render presidents of assize more dispassionate. When the prisoner has been questioned and harried till he is faint and despairing, he is allowed to sit down again. The president has done his duty, according to his lights, in endeavoring to wring a confession from the man, and, having failed, he is content to let him alone thenceforth. Now comes the time for the witnesses to be heard. They are not sworn upon a Testament, but are enjoined to lift up their right hand and swear to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." A rather needless question is asked them to start with, "How old are you?" After this they have to say whether they stand in any degree of relationship towards the accused. There is no cross-examination by the counsel for the defence as in England. It is the president who does all the interrogating. The prosecution and the defence may from time to time interpolate a question, but this is not done on any systematic plan, and the questions are always put through the president with his leave. In the newest-built assize courts the witnesses sit while giving their evidence.

After the witnesses for the prosecution have been heard, those for the defence come forward without any interposition in the shape of a speech from the prisoner's counsel. This is another point of difference from English procedure. The speeches are all delivered at the close of the evidence. The public prosecutor leads off with his *requisitoire*; if there be a claim for damages, the *avocat* of the civil parties to the suit follows, and then the counsel for the defence makes his harangue. One must call it a harangue, for whether the orator be one of the foremost men at the bar, or a mere forensic tyro, he is sure to indulge in a set declamation with a great deal of what is on this side of the Channel contemptuously termed "gush." As there are no juries in civil causes or in correctional courts,

avocats gladly avail themselves of the chances furnished by the assizes to try their lurking powers of humor, pathos, or sophistry on "twelve honest and intelligent jurymen." One of the most consummate jurists, the late M. Chaix d'Est Ange, whose practice lay entirely in the civil courts, used to say that it "refreshed" him to defend a prisoner now and then at the assizes. "It is good exercise for the whole body," he added naïvely. "To a judge one must talk with the head, but to a jury one may speak with head, heart, eyes, hands, and legs."

Let us not make too light of assize court oratory. It is of an infinitely higher quality than that so met with at the Old Bailey. To begin with, the French are born talkers; they are, moreover, warm-hearted, quick-willed, and æsthetic. You can appeal to the feelings of the least cultured among them by lofty theories upon humanity, and you may captivate the minds of the most intelligent and highly educated by ingenious paradoxes. Jurymen are for the most part plain men of square sense; but one or two "thinkers" among the twelve will leaven the whole lump. The others will undergo the influence of their superior minds, and while not comprehending their theories perhaps will feel secretly ashamed of their own dullness, and will be anxious to prove that they, too, comprehend a *grande idée*. The *grande idée* may happen to be this, that a man is justified in slaying his mother-in-law if she interferes too perseveringly with his domestic arrangements; but what matter, if the verdict which consecrates this doctrine be received by the public with loud cheers?

In England we have by our sneers at "gush," "humbug," "clap-trap," "sentimentalism," etc., made our barristers ashamed to talk nobly. Very few of them, indeed, would care to risk that reputation for good sense which is so valued amongst us by launching hazardous theories in justification of great crimes. In cases of murder especially the plea of provocation can only be urged with the extremest caution. Neither judges nor juries will stand much of it, and some of the theories occasionally advanced in French courts of justice to save the necks of desperate scoundrels would be received in England not only with indignation, but with contemptuous laughter. Some time ago a Parisian tradesman named Martin, being on the verge of bankruptcy, was moved to right his affairs by murdering and robbing one of those messengers of the Bank

of France who may be seen going about the streets on the first and fifteenth of every month to collect payment of bills. These messengers are very conspicuous from wearing a grey uniform and carrying their satchels full of notes and gold slung by a chain to their sides. Martin decoyed one of these poor fellows into his shop under pretence of wanting change for a thousand-franc note, and while the messenger was stooping over his counter to spread out the gold, he clove his head open with a hatchet. The murder had been craftily planned, and might well have gone undetected, for Martin was alone in his shop; he had littered the floor thickly with sawdust, and he had made all his arrangements for dragging his victim down to the cellar and there burying him. Unfortunately for him the messenger was not killed outright. He had just strength enough left to wrench open the shop door and stagger into the street, where he died on the pavement.

How promptly an English judge and jury would have sent Martin to the gallows need not be insisted upon; but M. Lachaud, who defended the ruffian before a Parisian jury, did it with such skill that he moved them to tears. He drew a touching picture of the honest tradesman, the good husband and father, driven to despair by seeing himself on the point of ruin. He implored the jury to have mercy on a man who wanted to save his "commercial honor." No doubt it was wrong to try and save one's honor by murder and robbery, but such a wild design only proved the extent of mental aberration to which poor Martin had been brought by the prospect of seeing his credit broken. The jury, taking this kindly view of the matter, found "extenuating circumstances" in favor of Martin, who was consequently saved from the guillotine, and sentenced to transportation for life. As he has now undergone five years of his time, he is probably living as a free colonist in New Caledonia.

Such miscarriages of justice may seem to us monstrous, but they may be matched by plenty of others from recent judicial annals. M. Lachaud, who exercises a magical influence over juries, was three years ago called upon to defend a girl named Marie Bière, who had shot at her paramour with a revolver and wounded him so dangerously that for weeks he lay at the point of death. Marie Bière was not an artless girl wreaking frantic vengeance on a man who had seduced her, but a person of worthless antecedents, who, having formed a

liaison with a young gentleman of property, wished to induce him to marry her, and shot him because he was going to marry somebody else. It ought to have been regarded as an aggravating circumstance in her crime that her paramour had not sought to cast her off penniless, but had liberally settled an income of 144*l.* a year on her for life; and yet it was precisely on this fact that M. Lachaud based his most masterly defence of the girl and obtained her acquittal. He fully admitted how bad Mlle. Bière's antecedents had been; "but," he asked, with his fiery eloquence, "what has that to do with it? If this poor creature conceived a true and tender feeling of love for this man, if she had cherished the dream of becoming his wife and leading a life of purity thenceforth, was it not a most pitiable thing that her hopes of redemption should have been destroyed? You saw how she spurned his money—her love had purified her—he had won her heart and his desertion made her desperate. Are you going now by your verdict to affirm that women who have once fallen shall never be allowed to love, shall never blot out the past, shall be subject all their lives to the degradation of others such as this by which Marie Bière's lover sought, as he cynically said, to compensate her? Compensation at the rate of three hundred francs a month for a broken heart! Compensation by insult for a wrong most cruel, most worthy of good men's compassion?"

There were numbers of fine ladies, actresses, authors—the author of the "*Dame aux Camélias*" among them—who wept in court during this stirring address; and the bewildered jury brought in a verdict of not guilty, which was hailed with tremendous applause, waving of handkerchiefs and hats. Marie Bière, in leaving the court, received an enthusiastic ovation from the crowd in the Salle des Pas Perdus, and for several days afterwards the girl's lodgings were beset by warm-hearted people, who brought her bouquets, cards, and more substantial gifts. But her acquittal produced most disastrous consequences. It led in fact to a very epidemic of shooting and vitriol-throwing. In the course of the last two years, at least twenty girls have been arraigned at the assizes for seeking reparation for their blighted hopes *vi et armis*, and M. Lachaud's famous speech, repeated with every kind of variation suitable to particular circumstances, by barristers great and small, has always led to acquittals. In one of these

cases M. Georges Lachaud, nephew of the great Lachaud, had to meet the remonstrances of the public prosecutor, who plainly pointed out that the constant acquittal of adventuresses who had no object but to bring themselves into notoriety by committing murder was really a public scandal and a danger to society. "I contend, on the contrary, that such acquittals are tending unmistakably to moralize society," answered M. Georges Lachaud. "By proving that you have no sympathy with young men of loose morals you are making them cautious. All laws have failed to make them virtuous, but one such verdict as you may render can frighten them into becoming so."

Such appeals to juries to judge a case on higher grounds than those of mere law seldom miss their effect; and it has gradually come to be accepted as a doctrine in France that the jurymen need not feel themselves tethered by the letter of the oath which they swear. They are representatives of the people rendering popular justice, not according to the hard, unelastic texts of the law, but according to the highest dictates of abstract equity, common sense, and mercy. M. Lachaud, who is a truly great orator, and has done more than any man alive to educate juries into the notion that they must judge with their hearts and not with their heads, is ably seconded in his theories by his son, and his nephew, and by M^{rs}. Allon, Nicolet, Demange, Carraby and others. All these *avocats* are arch blarneyers. Their fantastic arguments and hysteric declamations make judges to moan, but they cause juries to weep, and all the gain is for the prisoners. A curious result of this state of things is this, that if a man have a quarrel with his enemy he had far better for his own sake kill him outright than maim him. For an aggravated assault he will be tried before three judges without a jury in the correctional court, and stands a good chance of getting five years' imprisonment; but if he kills his man, he will be tried before a jury, and if it be proved that he acted in hot blood without premeditation, an acquittal will very likely follow. It will certainly follow if the murder in hot blood have been the upshot of a quarrel between husband and wife in consequence of some infidelity on one side or the other. Juries never will punish the betrayed husband or wife who takes the law into his or her own hands. Lately a husband who had an unfaithful wife gave her a tremendous thrashing and broke her arm, for which he was sentenced

to a year's imprisonment by a correctional court. As he left the dock he exclaimed ruefully, "*Mon Dieu, voilà ce qu'on gagne à se montrer trop doux !*"

IV.

WHEN the counsel for the defence has finished his speech, the public prosecutor replies; but this privilege will probably be taken from him before long, on the same principle as that which made the legislature suppress the summing up of the judge. Humanitarians think that the last word in a trial should be spoken by the defence, so that the jury may retire with cries for mercy still ringing in their ears.

French jurymen are not detained, as in England, throughout the whole duration of a trial for felony. They may return to their homes in the evening, and go where they please, and speak with whom they please during the adjournments for lunch. Once they have retired to consider their verdict, however, they are locked up until they have come to a decision. The only person with whom they may communicate is the president of the court; and if they desire to see him he is summoned to their room. Their verdict has to be given under the form of answers by "Yes" or "No" to a number of questions stated for them in writing by the president. These questions sometimes exceed a hundred, and cover several pages of foolscap in the clerk of arraign's handwriting. Unanimity is not required for the finding of a verdict, but there must be a majority of eight to four to carry a full conviction. If the votes are equally divided the prisoner is acquitted; if five pronounce for an acquittal and seven for a conviction, the prisoner gets the benefit of what is called *minorité de faveur*, and the bench by adding their three votes to the five given in his favor may acquit him if they think fit. A verdict delivered without any finding of "extenuating circumstances" carries with it the maximum penalty; but the maximum can never be inflicted when "extenuating circumstances" are allowed. Thus murderers tried for their lives always escape the guillotine when the judges find *circonstances atténuantes*. Verdicts of this description are often delivered simply because the majority of a jury may object to capital punishment. They none the less produce a painful and startling effect upon the minds of right-thinking persons, when the recipient of clemency happens to be a villanous scoundrel for whose crime, humanly speaking, there

should be no mercy at all. It shocks people to hear a jury find extenuating circumstances in favor of a brute who has murdered his aged parents to rob them of their savings; or of a monster, like that man in the Ain, who last year blew up a house, and killed three people, because he wanted to destroy at one stroke five relations who stood between him and some property. The inmates of the house were nine in number, and the murderer had coldly planned to kill them all. It was by a sheer miracle that six of them escaped death. Nevertheless, the jury found "extenuating circumstances," and the judges were so indignant at this scandalous verdict that they marked their sense of it in a rather odd fashion by sentencing the prisoner to twenty years' transportation only, instead of to transportation for life. The effect of this would be that the convict might in ten years obtain a pardon and return to France; whereas, if sentenced for life, he would have to spend the remainder of his days in New Caledonia, even if discharged from the penal colony there on ticket-of-leave. The judges practically said to the jury: "Since you take an interest in this malefactor, you shall have the pleasure of seeing him among you again in a few years."

It must be remarked that juries who are so compassionate towards the perpetrators of violent murders are seldom tender towards forgers, burglars, and other offenders against property; they are not lenient towards poisoners either. Murder with a knife, revolver, or bludgeon is all very well, but treacherous poisoning strikes even the most opaque-minded jurymen as a thing to be discouraged. Even M. Lachaud has often expended his eloquence quite vainly in the attempt to enlist pity for wives who put lucifer matches into their husband's soup, or sons who drugged their father's coffee with laudanum. Since M. Grévy's accession to the presidency of the republic, however, capital punishment has been suffered to fall into disuse, so that murderers of the most unpopular categories, though sentenced to death, are no longer executed.

When the jury have found their verdict they return into court, and the foreman delivers the finding in an impressive manner. He lays his hand upon his heart and says, "On my honor and conscience, before God and men, the verdict of the jury is unanimously (or by a majority as the case may be) on the first question "Yes;" on the second question "Yes;" and so

on. The prisoner is not in court either when the verdict is delivered or when sentence is pronounced. He has been led out when the jury retired, and he is not brought into the dock again until the court has publicly pronounced sentence. The object of this arrangement is to prevent the judges being disturbed in their calm deliberations by the prisoner's shrieks and entreaties for mercy. When the prisoner is brought into court he knows that mercy is past praying for. He is informed of his conviction and doom by the clerk of the court, who reads him the sentence which has been drawn up on paper; and he is then told that he has three days before him in which to appeal to the Court of Cassation.

Every prisoner appeals as a matter of course; but the Court of Cassation is only a court of appeal after a fashion. It does not enter into the rights or wrongs of an appellant's cause; it has simply to determine whether this trial was conducted with all the requisite legal formalities. If there have been an informality of the most trivial kind, the proceedings are quashed, and a new trial is ordered. It is this that makes French judges and procurators so minutely careful in framing indictments and wording sentences. If there have been the omission of a single letter in the prisoner's name, or a misstatement about his age, it is enough to form *un cas de cassation*. The barristers who plead before the *Cour de Cassation* practice in no other courts. They are a special class of hair-splitters who apply all their acumen to the detection of little flaws in masses of documents. So thoroughly impersonal are their pleadings that, in a famous case of murder, where a whole day was spent in arguing on the appeal for a new trial, the name of the convict was never once mentioned.

To return to the assize court. It is a good practice in France to carry on a trial once commenced uninterruptedly to its conclusion. If it cannot be terminated on a Saturday night, the court sits on Sunday; and from the moment when the counsel for the defence has begun his speech there is no more break in the proceedings, even though that speech be finished very late in the evening. No case has yet occurred in France of a speech in a criminal case lasting more than one day; but it often happens that juries are not dismissed to consider their verdicts till past midnight, and only return into court in the small hours of the morning.

There is no law to prevent judges from adjourning their courts at the conclusion of the defence if the hour be late; but it is not customary for them to do so now that the summing up has been abolished. On ordinary days the court opens at 10 A.M. and rises at 6 or 7 P.M. There is always on the part of French judges a laudable desire to consult the convenience of witnesses by keeping them as short a time as possible in attendance at the court; and barristers assist this object by consenting without a murmur to remain in court as late in the evening as may be necessary to expedite business.

This does not prevent bench and bar from enjoying themselves in the usual festive manner at the close of each day's proceedings. The assizes furnish occasion for a round of dinners. The local authorities each give one, turn by turn; and after the assizes are over the president generally entertains all his late hosts at a banquet. This repast is followed by a grand reception which is attended by all public or private persons who desire to pay their respects to the judges. It is a matter of etiquette that the forty members of the jury panel should always come.

As for the prisoners, it may be remarked of those sentenced to death that they stand in quite a different position to that of English convicts in the same case. They receive no intimation of the date when their execution will take place. The Court of Cassation to which they have appealed may perhaps not call up their case for a couple of months; and after that some more days will be occupied in forwarding a *recours en grâce*, or petition for mercy, to the president of the republic. M. Grévy is opposed to capital punishment; but not so determinedly opposed to it as never to have signed a death warrant. He has allowed three men to be guillotined out of about sixty who have been sentenced to death since his accession, and this proportion, small as it is, is sufficient to prevent murderers from feeling absolutely reassured as to the fate awaiting them. They hear nothing of what is being done for or against them outside the prison walls. The *avocats* who defended them draw up the *recours en grâce*, but the convicts are not supposed to know what chances there are of these petitions being entertained or rejected. If a convict is to be executed, the first certain intimation which he receives of the painful fact comes about a quarter of an hour before his head drops

into the sawdust basket of the guillotine. Some morning—it may be two or three months after his trial—he is aroused at break of day by the governor of the prison entering his cell and saying kindly: “A—, your appeal has been rejected, and your petition dismissed: the moment has arrived—” The unhappy man, rolling out of bed and staggering to his feet, sees the gaol chaplain, who has walked in behind the governor, and two or three warders who assist him hastily to dress. From this moment everything is done with the utmost celerity. The prisoner has wine pressed upon him; three minutes are allowed him to make his shirt, then he is led out and pinioned. Next moment he is half conducted, half pushed, into the open air, where the guillotine stands surrounded by dense squares of mounted troops and police, behind whom are massed large crowds straining their eyes, with not much effect, to see what is about to take place. The modern guillotine is not erected on a platform, but is placed on the ground. The convict makes half-a-dozen steps; the executioner's assistants seize him, push him roughly against an upright board, which falls forward, pivoting under his weight, and brings him in a horizontal position with his neck between the grooves, above which the knife is suspended. The executioner touches a spring; the knife flashes as it falls; and all is over. Watch in hand it has been reckoned that when all the preliminaries of execution are smartly conducted, no more than fourteen minutes ought to elapse from the time when the convict is startled out of sleep to the instant when his head and body part company.

From the Christian point of view it is certainly deplorable that a convict having a sure knowledge of his impending death should never be able seriously to prepare his mind for it. But the French act upon the principle of making things as easy as possible for the doomed man. Even the prison chaplain thinks it his duty to hold out hopes of a commutation, though he may have no good reason for feeling that the sentence will not be carried out. The convict then passes his last weeks of existence in a fool's paradise. He is encouraged to smoke, he is allowed enough wine to make him, if not drunk, at least merry—that is a quart a day—and the warders in his cell play cards with him as much as he likes, it being their chief care to keep the man from moping and giving them trouble.

From Temple Bar.

AN ATTEMPT TO REACH MERV; OR, SIX WEEKS IN SERRUKHS.

It was on Good Friday morning that my friend Campbell and I rode out of the Herat gate of Meshed, the capital of Khorassan and the holy city of pilgrimage of all Shia Mahomedans. The day that we chose for our start may perhaps account for our not having succeeded in our object, which was to reach Merv, and see something of Turkoman life. Our companions were two Orientals whom we dubbed respectively the Nabob and the Holy Man. The former was a descendant of a once powerful Carnatic potentate, whose progenitors had for some generations been settled in Persia; he himself had travelled all over Europe, and in addition to a knowledge of English, had acquired what one rarely meets among Orientals, the feelings and sense of honor of an English gentleman. The Holy Man, whom we called so from his scrupulous attention to his religious duties, which sometimes delayed us at inconvenient moments, was a good specimen of the Persian gentleman, pious—not to say bigoted—neatly dressed, punctilious and urbane.

An unusually rainy spring had carpeted the waterless plains with a temporary covering of flowers and grass, which rendered our journey much more pleasant than it otherwise would have been. A three days' ride brought us to the plains of Jâm, a country evidently subject to the Turkoman raids, where every village was walled and carefully shut in at night with heavy wooden doors; while every field was provided with a little mud tower, in which the hunted husbandman could find refuge from the mounted Turkoman, who could not follow through the low aperture.

At the village of Ferimân, we were joined by the khan of Jâm, who was himself desirous of getting to Merv, as he had been deputed by the prince governor of Meshed to endeavor to bring about a better understanding between the Persian government and the Tekkeh Turkomans who inhabit that oasis. The khan brought with him a body of about seventy horsemen, besides a long string of baggage camels, so that our cavalcade assumed very imposing proportions. Our chief hope of getting into Merv lay in a Turkoman of the Tekkeh tribe, Tâj Sirdir by name, celebrated as a daring and successful raider, who, before the Russian conquest of the khanates beyond the Oxus,

had driven a thriving trade in kidnapping men and women for the slave-market of Bukhara. This trade having failed, he had been sent to patch up matters between his people and the Persian government; hence his presence among the followers of the khan, though we had previously made his acquaintance at Meshed.

On the second day after leaving Ferimân we reached the river Keshaf Rood, now so swollen by the winter snows as to be completely unfordable. We wasted a day in fruitless search for a ford, and ended by having to construct a bridge out of snags and willows, a work of considerable ingenuity. A short day after the one occupied in building the bridge, brought us to the mud fort of Moozderân, between which and the frontier fort of Serrukhs lay a descent of three thousand feet from the high table-land, and then thirty miles of waterless desert. We bivouacked one night at the outermost foothills, and on May 2nd reached Serrukhs, where we took up our quarters with the military commandant, a young colonel of nineteen, who spoke a little French acquired at the military college at Teheran. On the morrow Tâj started to arrange for our reception by his tribe at Merv; he was in high spirits and confident of success, and we already looked forward to a speedy release from durance at this outpost fort. With some difficulty we persuaded the little colonel and a ragged company of soldiers to accompany us outside the mud walls to see the Turkoman caravan cross the Tejed Ab, which flows about half a mile to the north-east of the fort. In ordinary seasons it is easily fordable, but the late rains, to which we were indebted for our green ride over the desert, had now made it a swift, muddy stream, flowing in two channels, each eighty to a hundred yards in width, and deep enough for it to be no child's play to swim the horses and camels through the current; indeed only half the caravan succeeded in crossing before nightfall.

Campbell rode off on the following morning with the colonel and a few men to watch the crossing of the remainder of the caravan, leaving me engaged in a leisurely toilet from which I was suddenly startled by hearing the guns of the fort begin to fire with ball. I rushed to the roof to see what had become of Campbell. There he was with the colonel safe enough, except from the ill-directed artillery of our own bastions, and from his position he could see how matters oc-

curred on the other side of the river much better than I, who was about a mile off from the scene of action. His attention, as he afterwards told me, was first attracted by some musket-shots fired from the place where the caravan was loading up, and there was evidently a sharp fight going on round the little mound on which was the camp. The attacking horsemen apparently failed in their first attempt, and drew off to the shelter of a bluff, where, though hidden from the caravan, they were plainly visible to Campbell and near enough to tempt the guns of the fort to the futile expenditure of ammunition which had disturbed me. A second charge across the open was made and again repulsed, and then after a pause forty or fifty of the assailants crept sword in hand through the tamarisk jungle by the river and made a rush for the camp; a smart fire from the improvised defences caused them to give ground, and a well-timed charge of ten or a dozen of the defenders fairly completed their rout, for after a short parley the attacking party remounted and rode off at a slow and seemingly dejected pace down the river bank. Many details we learnt subsequently from a messenger sent over by Tâj. It appears that the raiders were Mervees and therefore clansmen of the Turkomans, under whose convoy the merchants were travelling; on this account they had not dared to fire a single shot during the whole attack, as they were acting against rule and custom in molesting their tribesmen's convoy, and would be called heavily to account for any blood spilt. The raiders, who it seems had been out after us two days before but had come up too late, were under the leadership of a *düzd-bashi* (raid-leader) named Dugatir. He was wounded in the first charge, then tied on his horse by his friends and led up in front of them during the second charge, in hopes that he would die and thus justify the plundering of their tribesmen's caravan, and with his blood to avenge they would have been able to face explanations with the tribe at home. Their amiable intentions towards Dugatir were, however, frustrated by his falling off his horse, and as he perversely refused to die he was left on the field and eventually carried into the camp. In the second charge two or three of the assailants were wounded by the men of the caravan, led by Tâj, and some of their horses were killed. While all this was going on, the Persian garrison ran helter-skelter down to the river to join their colonel, leaving

only fifteen gunners to serve the six guns, while the gates were open and the fort nearly empty.

On the morrow the uncertain nature of our hopes began to dawn on us; the caravan were waiting, they said, for reinforcements from their clan in Merv, which meant to us a delay of three weeks before the invitation of the tribe could come to us; and what was worse than the delay was the doubt that arose as to the power of our friend Tāj to get the chiefs of all the clans to invite us and subscribe to our safe-conduct. It was not till three days after this that the caravan at length started, and there was then nothing for us to do but to wait patiently the arrival of a messenger with the invitation. We varied the monotony of our life by an occasional ride down to the river bank, but even this required a guard of thirty to forty men, while for an hour's ride up or down the river the whole garrison must turn out, such was the "terror of the Turkomans." There were just inequalities enough in the ground to give cover to large bodies of horsemen, to whom it would be an easy task to cut off small detachments of the Persian garrison. We began to be much troubled with mosquitoes, which swarmed on the banks of the river, and seemed to follow us into the fort, where they remained our guests for the night. My own torments, however, were nothing to those of our pious friend, the Holy Man, whom it quite consoled me to watch at his afternoon devotions. There he was, a victim bound for the slaughter, with his arms and neck bare, and almost covered with blood, and the defunct bodies of his tormentors whom he had managed to slay in the pauses of prayer. I am sure, poor fellow, that his devotions ought to have scored double. One afternoon we rode a distance of three miles with a party of soldiers ordered to cut wood for fuel at the nearest bush; another day we went out to look at the process of cutting a canal, by which the fort and the ground around it was to be irrigated; but days of outing like this only occurred at rare intervals. The ordinary twenty-four hours' employment consisted of trying vainly to sleep by night, despite the fleas, mosquitoes, etc. (and the etc. were very large and voracious), eating mutton and rice periodically washed down with brackish, muddy water, of such amusement as could be derived from our limited library, and of the evening walk round the mud ramparts. Life was even more monotonous than at sea, and for days and weeks the little garrison

was absolutely cut off from the outer world, till the utter physical stagnation seemed to sink deeper and deeper into one's being. Twenty days had now gone by and no answer from Tāj about his doings at Merv; the weather too was getting hot, the thermometer seldom standing below 90°. We began to be much troubled by the number of big, hairy-legged poisonous tarantulas, with bloated bodies the size of a walnut, which crept out of the innumerable crevices in the mud walls of our living-rooms. Their bite is more venomous and painful than the sting of a scorpion, and that I escaped being bitten I attribute to the surprising accuracy which we all acquired in flinging a book laterally so as to squash the soft body of the advancing spider. The Holy Man was a special adept at this measure of self-defence. The tarantulas more particularly invaded us at dinner-time, attracted by the lights placed on the tablecloth on the floor. Each member of the party always sat down to meals with a little pile of books at his hand, and many a time was I startled, while bending over crosslegged into my soup-plate, by the sudden slam of a book against the wall behind me, projected by my holy friend opposite, who, with a "Praise be to Allah!" would daintily pick up almost a handful of flattened tarantula that in another moment would have been on my neck.

Towards the end of May, when our stay in Serrukhs had already dragged on over the fourth week, we received a visit from a certain Begunj, one of the most infamously celebrated of the many raiders of Merv. Three days before, we had sent off a post-bearing Turkoman, Oraz Geldy by name, to Meshed to catch the mail to Teheran, and to hurry up an incoming postman some days overdue; he took with him a pony of Campbell's, on which to bring back certain stores. Next morning we were surprised to see Oraz Geldy turn up again, bringing in the remains of our much-longed-for post-bag, which he said he had got from Begunj, the raider, whose man had tracked our postman to a place called Gumbazli, four miles from Moozderān, and there shot him, in spite of his being an *ishān* or priest. So said Oraz Geldy, who had been stopped by Begunj early that morning; the latter had twenty men with him, and had announced his intention of cutting off all our communication with Meshed. For the portion of the mail brought in, we had to pay twenty *krāns* (francs), and it was proposed that Camp-

bell should buy back his captured pony, but to this he objected as likely to prove a bad precedent for further extortion. That the "priest" should have been shot with so little ceremony seemed an unlikely tale, even for these parts, and we more than suspected that he had only been carried off. Oraz Geldy was despatched again with his Meshed bag, but accompanied by a certain Saruk Turkoman, who volunteered as a messenger of peace to bring in the wounded man if still alive. He carried with him a bag of flour as a present, and an invitation to the robbers to come in and submit themselves.

The Saruk came back after a few hours, and reported that no blood had been spilt, that the old *ishân* had been caught asleep, stripped, and hurried off to an old mud fort by the river. Meanwhile Begunj and his men had sat down to feast on the bag of flour: they had ransacked the post-bag and thrown away some of the letters and papers, keeping the rest for some purpose difficult to guess, for it was by mere chance that they met Oraz Geldy.

That evening a small Turkoman caravan from Merv came and camped in the fort, showing that they placed considerable trust in the good faith of the colonel; there were about a score of Turkomans with some camels and ponies for sale, and a few bundles of carpets, the small dark red rugs made only in the desert, and much prized in Persia for their fast colors and almost eternal wearing powers. The caravan-leader, a Mervee, was very indignant with Begunj and his doings, and declared that he would give him a taste of his sword-blade. He brought us the first news of Taj's arrival at Merv, and also rumors of a disputed succession to the chieftainship of the tribe, which accounted in some way for the recent irregularities of Dugatir, Begunj & Co.

The old "priest," our captured postman, came in next day none the worse for his adventures, bringing too with him the pony which had been released by Begunj, who sent in a message to the colonel that he would like to meet him for a palaver on the river bank. Begunj's band had broken up, it was said, so after due precautions the colonel sallied forth to his interview with the rascal. In a couple of hours he returned, accompanied by the redoubtable Begunj himself, and pointed him out to us with an air of triumph, for no former commandant had ever been able to get the old thief to set foot inside the fort; presently he was peaceably sipping his tea about the floor, while he secured our favor by giving up some stray letters

out of the bag that he himself had stopped. I have never seen a man whose whole appearance was so wolf-like; his small, gray eyes never rested for a moment, and his face, well scarred over, was ferocious and cruel to a degree unusual even among these savages. How he came to trust himself inside the fort to the word of a Persian I could not make out; he perhaps looked to our presence as a guarantee against foul play. He was accompanied by only two or three of his men, all that remained of his band.

The few incidents that characterized the remaining weeks of our stay in Serukhs can be briefly narrated. Hope deferred of reaching Merv, and the various ills that were sapping our bodily strength, had made me long to get out of the place almost at any cost, though Campbell was still keen to go on. Whether it was the water, the climate, or the fact that every mouthful of food was fly-blown, I know not, but we all began to suffer in health before the fourth week of our stay was out. It began with Campbell, who one fine day had a violent fit of vomiting after breakfast; at dinner following, the Holy Man was seized in the same way, and the Nabob's stomach was sympathetically affected. I was the only well one of the party, and well only in that I could digest my food, for utter prostration, mental and bodily, had come over me, and I well remember passing whole hours in dreamy discomfort, doing nothing and unable even to think or care as to what might happen. The spirits of all were flagging from inaction, and it was curious to note the different ways in which we were affected—one had sore eyes, another strange, blister-like eruptions, while a third was awakened in the night by a feeling of feverish pain, to find his face, chest, and hands covered with a red rash which by morning had disappeared. It was not the heat, for though above ninety degrees there was a constant breeze. Our supply, too, of provisions was fairly good except in the matter of fresh vegetables and wine; but the Tejend water was muddy and slightly brackish, and we had no good filters, still less any distilling apparatus.

The servants became demoralized, and took to gambling and opium-smoking. One day they were caught dicing in a tent hard by, and the Nabob administered speedy correction for this infraction of Mahomedan law. His court of justice was quite a diversion to our monotonous existence. There he stood under the shadow of the only tree the fort boasted,

his honored head shaded by an umbrella held by his trusty Sheerazee servant. The offenders were brought before him, and in the most mellifluous Persian he pointed out to them the enormity of their offence, and described the pains of hell that would certainly be their lot. A little smart castigation, which elicited much weeping and calling on the mercy of Heaven, etc., impressed the matter on their minds. The Nabob's action was grand throughout, and I doubt whether in the palmiest days of their rule his ancestors had ever been more promptly obeyed—for it is always a gratification for one servant to be allowed to beat another—and in this case, as the punishment was not carried too far and was clearly deserved, the matter was brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and we relapsed into the past monotony, broken only by the periodical arrival of the post, and of messengers from Merv.

Their intelligence was very indefinite: party faction ran high in Merv, but still Tāj begged us to wait as he yet hoped to get the tribe as a whole to invite us as we desired; but the news we got about the same time from Meshed forced us to put a definite term to the period to which this waiting on could be protracted; for besides the state of our bodily health, our presence in the holy city was required by the arrival there of some friends. Had we done Tāj's bidding I believe we might still to this day have been waiting on at Serrukhs. But the durance vile was not yet quite ended for either of us. The flies were now our great enemies; everything was covered with them, and it was impossible to keep the room clear. Till this time I never fully realized the sufferings of the Egyptians. Some small satisfaction we did obtain by laying streaks of gunpowder in a sort of labyrinth, surrounding little heaps of sugar on the floor, and by the explosion annihilating some hundreds of our tormentors; but this was a diversion we could only afford twice a day, for the supply of powder was limited, and must be husbanded in case it should be wanted against nobler game.

The khan of Jām was detained along with us in Serrukhs by the state of affairs in Merv. From him we had an interesting account of that place, and of the Turkoman "parliaments," for he had visited the oasis several times. The respect paid to veteran opinion, he said, was extreme, regardless of wealth or social position; young men never spoke at all. A marked characteristic was the unanimity with which a decision was received when

once clearly approved by a majority of the greybeards; the whole assembly rises with a shout of "*Allaho Akbar*" ("Allah is greatest"), and from that moment the question so settled becomes law to the tribe without. But all this referred to a time when they were more or less led by an universally recognized chief; at this present time they had no proper leader; the old chief was dead, and his son did not seem strong enough to reign in his stead. This was a fact brought home to us by every stray Turkoman we now saw, each telling some new tale of internecine squabbles; and a letter now arrived from Tāj admitting, in a somewhat roundabout way, that he could do nothing more just at present, though still hopeful for the future.

Our journey back to Meshed was becoming every day more and more difficult from the waterless and grassless state of the desert; the spring herbage had long since been burned up, and the pools of water, at which the mules had enjoyed a muddy draught on the out journey, were now turned into dusty hollows, or at best but pits of stinking clay.

Our last ride outside the fort before we turned our backs on it for good and all, was to the ruins of the old mosque of Ulugh Baba, which lay three miles to the north, almost opposite the mounds now covering the site of old Serrukhs, the ancient Syrinx, which are on the farther bank of the stream. The mosque must in its day have been a fine specimen of the blue and yellow tiled edifices found all over western Asia; little remained now except the ruins of the cloister round the court, and the arched gatehouse forming the entrance. On the latter, which was highly ornamented with blue mosaic work and interlaced design, might yet be read the dedicatory inscription bearing the date 757 A.H., corresponding to 1356 of our era.

On our return to the fort we found a messenger from Merv, bringing further letters from Tāj, who informed us that so numerous and powerful were the obstructionists in the council at Merv, that he feared there would be little chance just now of getting the tribes collectively to invite us to visit them. The obstructionists, it would appear, were principally composed of the baffled raiders and their friends, whose defeat in their attempt to capture the caravan had made them sulky.

This news determined us to wait no longer in Serrukhs. The poor khan of Jām was very dolorous over all this, for he dared not get away with us, being tied

down by the instructions of his government. He ended, I believe, in passing the greater part of the summer at Serrukhs, and returned, at last, worn out by fever, without having got any nearer to Merv than we had done. Campbell accordingly wrote at once to Tâj, saying that we were obliged to be back at Meshed at a certain day, but would return as soon as he (Tâj) should be in a position to receive us as guests. This letter was despatched next day by Taj's messenger, and in twenty-four hours from his leaving us he returned with an answer, having accomplished the two hundred and forty odd miles of desert from Serrukhs to Merv and back in that short time, riding one horse going and another returning; he was a big, brawny savage, too, of at least sixteen stone weight. We had sent to Meshed for our escort, and the week that elapsed before it arrived was occupied in corresponding with Tâj, who still hoped, in time, to arrange matters, but repeated that at present he could do nothing, a small portion of the tribe only being anxious for our coming. Moreover the discussions on the matter of the chiefship were becoming serious, and till this was settled our visit could not be satisfactorily arranged. Just at present — so we learned from the messengers — Tâj was busily engaged in undermining the influence of Baba Khan, one of the candidates for the chiefship; and it was very evident that while thus engaged he could not fully attend to our business.

And so, finally disappointed of our visit to Merv, weak and ill many of us from sickness brought on through bad water, and all of us enervated by the monotony and want of proper exercise during the month and a half that we had spent at Serrukhs, we for the last time filed out at the Meshed gate of the fort in the late afternoon of the 15th of June, and at 6.30 P.M. began our wearisome march over the now arid desert. Besides our mounted escort we had some twenty-five of the garrison who were going on leave; they, poor fellows, were on foot, and tramped bravely on through the whole night, while we rode at marching pace so as not to separate from our mules. Never do I remember to have found a night so long, not even when ill and lying awake in bed. There was no ticking of a clock to chronicle the passing hours, and the stars on the western horizon seemed as though they never would set. The longing to sleep is almost overpowering in the hours before dawn, but the moment you begin to doze, your body bends forward in the

saddle, and you awake to find yourself falling off, and your horse starting from a touch of the spur that you have inadvertently given him. From half past six that night till eight the following evening we rode on, always at foot's pace, stopping an hour at midnight for supper, and for three hours next morning. I think I never before was so tired as when at last I got off my horse at Moozderân fort. The very slowness of the pace, whereby we saved our beasts, added to the intense weariness brought on by our being so out of condition at starting.

Our journey back to Meshed was entirely devoid of incident. This time we had no need to make a bridge over the river where we had been delayed on our outward journey; the water hardly reached our horses' knees at the ford, and a month later a muddy bed with pools at intervals would have taken the place of the roaring torrent which had given us so much trouble to cross at the end of April.

From the ford, instead of turning off to the left into the Jâm plain, we now kept along the right bank of the river, and on the evening of the fourth day after leaving Serrukhs, camped in a charming garden called Husainabad, some five miles outside Meshed. How we revelled in the sound of running waters and the cool shade of the trees, a form of enjoyment that no one can appreciate who has not spent some time in a burnt-up desert on a fare of salt water and flies! For myself, I thought I never could tire of drinking water that was not salt, or weary of lying on a carpet beside a rivulet eating melons in the shade.

The following day, though loth to leave the pleasant brook, we cantered on to Meshed at sundown, and took up our quarters, not within the holy city this time, but in a garden full of plane-trees and vines outside the walls, which rejoiced in the appalling name of the "Garden of Blood," why so called I never could find out. Here for a week or two we gladly rested, enjoying the company of our lately arrived friends, interested with various matters that had occurred during our absence, and making preparations for a journey over another part of the border.

Although on this occasion we had been disappointed in getting to Merv, our hopes were high for the future. Our stay at Serrukhs—Heaven knows tedious enough at the time—was not without interest in the retrospect. We had become acquainted with many odd specimens of the human race, and seen the life of an outpost Persian fort in a way that rarely falls to

the lot of the traveller. In addition to this, Campbell and I mutually congratulated each other that henceforth no place could seem dull, no life monotonous, when compared to that of the six weeks we had so amiceably spent together in Serrukhs.

From The Spectator.

ORIENTAL PATRIOTISM.

WE know of no subject upon which the opinion of experts in Asiatic affairs is so hopelessly divided as that of Oriental patriotism. A great number of the keenest of them, and especially of the men whose experience is entitled to respect, say that such a feeling as patriotism does not exist in any Asiatic. He can and will die for his creed, or for his tribe, or caste, or for his dynasty; but of patriotism he has no conception. He very rarely or never has a word in his language to express the virtue, his public opinion does not require it as a condition of political life, and under temptation he never finds in it any source of strength. An Asiatic, such observers say, can be very loyal to a ruler, or to an ally, or to an idea, but his loyalty to what we term his "country" is of the feeblest character. He may speak of patriotism in words, especially when talking to Europeans; but his impelling motive is always either ambition, or pride, or fanaticism, and not, especially under temptation, love of country. He will sell his country in order to rule it, and sometimes for mere lucre, especially when he is out of spirits, and thinks destiny has declared against the virtues. Those observers who think thus believe in their own view very firmly, point to the case of Tej Singh, who sold victory, as General Cunningham reports, for £220,000, and ridicule the notion that a man like Arabi Pasha can be governed by anything like "nationalist" feeling. He may be, they admit, a Mussulman fanatic, or a devotee of the khalifate—which is not quite the same thing—or even an "Asiatic," that is, a man who loathes European ascendancy; but he cannot care enough for Egypt to make Egyptian interest, as he conceives it, the guiding star of his policy,—cannot, in fact, be in any sense a patriot.

We should say that, on the whole, this was the more general opinion, especially among those experts who have come much in contact with prominent Asiatic statesmen, the men, that is, who are not sovereigns, but have risen either by serving or by opposing sovereigns. At the

same time, a minority of observers equally experienced, and we think, as a rule, possessed of more sympathy and insight, though not of greater force, utterly reject this view. They say that Asiatics not only can feel, but do feel the sentiment of patriotism as strongly as Europeans; that the want of a word to express the idea is an accident, which curiously enough, is reproduced in England, where, though every one understands "love of country," the only single word which expresses that sentiment is borrowed from the French; and that an Arab, a native of India, or a Chinaman, when a good man, is as strongly moved by the idea of "country," and all which it implies, as an Englishman or an American. He is more likely to be deficient in that virtue than a European, as he is more likely to be deficient in any other of the active virtues, his whole nature being feebler, and, so to speak, more feminine; yet he not only recognizes, but, unless overpowered by strong temptation, acts on it. He very often, for example, submits to invasion when a European would resist, but he never submits willingly, still less permanently. He never adopts the invader, never forgets that his own country is separate, and never ceases to hope that in God's good time the invader will be compelled to depart, or, if such extreme good-fortune may be, will be slaughtered out. As to self-sacrifice for his country, he fills up the national army readily enough, and this in countries like Afghanistan, which have no conscription; he serves as a soldier, say, in Turkey, with wonderful self-suppression; and he will, and does constantly, risk his fortune, rather than give an advantage to the national enemy. No foreign government in an Asiatic State is ever able quite to trust the people, while it is a universal experience that if a rising occurs, the people enter into a silent conspiracy to give it aid. They may not rise, but the foreigner hears nothing of the plot till it explodes, finds no one to betray the leaders, and is conscious of living in an atmosphere of deadly hostility. In the exceptional case of small states separated by any cause from their neighbors, like that of the Albanians, the Afghans, the Burmese, or the Druses, patriotism is a burning passion, to be as fully relied on as the same passion in any European country. Men who think thus declare that Arabi Pasha, though governed by mixed motives, still does feel the nationalist feeling; that his followers, though moved by many emotions, still do seek the independence of Egypt; and that a

good many of those whom we consider dangerous fools, actuated by bloodthirsty race-hatred, honestly believe that in rioting they are risking life in order to be rid of enemies to their country.

We confess we agree with the second party, though it is needful to make a reserve. We do not believe that, as a rule, patriotism is as strong in Asia as in Europe. Its influence there has been superseded in part by other ideas; by the claims of religion — fervent Ultramon- tanes are, even in Europe, seldom patriots before all things — by the feeling of race, which is as strong almost everywhere in Asia as in Ireland; and by the passion of "loyalty" in the technical sense, which constantly leads Asiatics to postpone everything, even independence, to the interests of a dynasty; but it exists almost precisely in the degree and form in which it existed among Europeans in the Middle Ages. The people of an Asiatic state like their country, and are proud of it; are prepared to do something, though not very much, in its defence; and are passively, but implacably and permanently, hostile to the foreigner who invades it. They are not, outside some portions of Arabia, democrats in any sense, but they are universally "nationalists," and prefer, distinctly prefer, bad government by themselves and through themselves, to good government by the foreigner. They may prefer one foreigner to another, as the Bengalees undoubtedly prefer Englishmen to Sikhs, and the Peguans prefer them to Burmese; but if they had the choice, they would prefer each other to anybody else. Nobody, we suppose, doubts this about Armenians, who, though white, are recognized throughout the Continent, from Shanghai to the Bosphorus, as true Asiatics, and can go in safety where no Europeans would be spared; or about Afghans, or about Arabs, or about Chinese; and it is true of far feebler races. There is not a Bengalee who is not proud of the old glories of Gour, or gratified when a European acknowledges the intellectual capacity of his countrymen, or sad when he admits that his *desh* — i.e., *patria*, as well as land — has constantly been conquered. There was not an Indian on the vast continent who did not consider the Sepoys nationalists, and did not, even if he dreaded their success, feel proud of their few victories. An old Hindoo scholar, definitely and openly on the English side, actually cried with rage and pain, in the writer's presence, over a report that Delhi was to be razed. He had never seen Delhi, but to him it was

"our beautiful city, such a possession for our country." The Egyptians are not a strong people, but it is quite useless to tell an Egyptian that the Europeans bring him prosperity and light taxes, as useless as to tell a true Irish nationalist the same thing about the English. He does not trouble himself to deny the facts, nay, very often believes them; but, all the same, he wants the intruders gone, if wealth and comfort go with them. It is true the feeling is not acute, and does not take the European form. The Asiatic's mind is full of bewildering cross-lights, of feelings about his creed, and his history, and his hates, and his personal interests, which, if they conflict with patriotism, often prove the stronger; but to say that is to say he is morally weak or intellectually crotchety, not to say he is unpatriotic. He knows what he is selling when he sells his country well enough, and if anybody else sells it will pour mental vitriol on his head. A "traitor," in the English sense, has not in Asia a pleasant time of it with posterity. Patriotism with him is not an overmastering idea. He has too many notions about destiny, and about the sanctity of power as granted by God, and about the necessity of obedience when extorted by adequate force, to be a Washington, or anything like a Washington; but his country has his sympathies, nevertheless, which, whenever there is a chance for their display, have to be reckoned with by politicians. The Egyptians have always obeyed foreigners, and, if the English conquered them, would be very fair subjects; but we have no doubt that the majority of them, though quiescent, would much rather that Egyptians succeeded in this struggle than that Europe did, and a little rather that Egyptians conquered than that Turks did. The Turk is a foreigner, but he is a Mussulman and an Asiatic. It may be said that the emotion is only one of hate, and, indeed, this is almost always said by the makers of telegrams, but it is not strictly true. The hatred exists, like the hatred for England in Ireland, but it is in great part the result of a feeling indistinguishable, at all events, from patriotism, a feeling compounded of national pride, national exclusiveness, and desire for national independence. If the Egyptian were a fighting man, like the Afghan, we should all understand him, but the possibility of sentiments or virtues in a passive state is always more or less incredible to the Englishman. Such sentiments exist, nevertheless, as the Englishman would remember, if he ever bethought himself

that he himself holds it part of his duty to turn his cheek to the smiter — honestly and sincerely holds it — though, when the hour comes, he turns his fist, instead.

From The Spectator.

POETRY AND PESSIMISM.

MR. LESLIE STEPHEN has told us that "nothing is less poetical than optimism," and assuredly pessimism has taken a strong hold on the minor poets of our day. Thus, in a series of sonnets, intended to convey "the portrait of a mind,"* and as we gather from the preface, the portrait not so much of an individual mind as of the mind most characteristic of the intellectual attitude of our own day, Mr. John Addington Symonds has brought what he terms "the soul's debate upon the fundamental question of man's place in the universe" to a conclusion with the following cheering Promethean allegory:—

O thou who sole 'neath Heaven's impetuous stars,

Chained to thy crucifix on those fierce fells,
Pierced by the pendent spikes of icicles,
Quailst beneath the world-wind's scimitars;
Thou, on whose wrinkling forehead, delved
with scars

Unnumbered ages score time's parallels,
Deep in whose heart sin's deathless nature
dwells;

Who on the low earth's liminary bars
Seest suns rise, suns set, ascending signs
And signs descending through æonian years;
Still unaccompanied save by dreams and fears,
Still stayed by hope deferred that ne'er declines;

O thou, Prometheus, protomartyr, thus
Teach men to dree life's doom on Caucasus.

That is certainly quite in the spirit of the pessimist poet Leopardi, much more in that spirit, indeed, than in that of the other pair in the trio of pessimist poets, — Leopardi, Byron, Heine, — whom Mr. James Sully, in his book on pessimism, regards as the great poetical progenitors of this school of modern thought in modern Europe; for Byron mingled so much of personal passion with his pessimism, and Heine shrieked it out in so ironic a scream of almost hysterical laughter, that they rendered it impossible for us to judge with any accuracy how far their beliefs were real beliefs, and not merely effective forms of indictment against an age which it suited their characters and their genius to condemn.

* *Animi Figura.* By John Addington Symonds.
London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

But Leopardi, at all events, believed in the irremediable and inevitable evil of existence as much as he believed in anything, — far more truly, for instance, than Sophocles ever believed what he puts into the mouth of one of his choruses, that "not to be born is much the best, but having seen the light, the next best is to go as soon as may be whence one came." In the play of Sophocles, that is the natural sentiment of the moment on the lips of overawed and trembling old men, but it is hardly his own. Leopardi, however, dilates on this as the leading truth of this world, not only in his poems, but in essay after essay intended to illustrate this creed. No one can tell for certain that either Byron or Heine, scoff as both of them would at the evils of life and the selfishness and pettiness of man, held existence to be an evil. But so soon as Leopardi became popular, a school of philosophy grew up which tried to carry pessimism to the same recognized position as one of the great intellectual creeds of Europe, which it had long occupied among the creeds of Asia. Of the tendencies which favored this attempt Mr. James Sully, in the interesting book on pessimism to which we have already referred, gives us the following explanation:—

In its earliest manifestations, it was the apparent failure of a social and political ideal which brought about this state of despondency. In more recent years, the collapse of the extravagant expectations and endeavors of certain æsthetic schools, has probably perpetuated, if it has not deepened, the pessimistic mood. So far as we can judge of the dominant features of our own age, there seems much just now to bend the sensitive mind in the pessimistic direction. The critical attrition of revered traditions is, and will be for a long time yet, keenly resented as a denudation of life of its crowning beauty and worth. Science, it is true, flourishes and progresses; yet it has not so far presented to the mass of mankind any new inspiring ideas, any noble imaginative forms for their emotional aspirations. Then, too, the absence of new creative vigor in art, which is possibly more than a passing phenomenon, leaves men's propensities to enthusiasm unsatisfied in an æsthetic direction. To this, one may add that the single art which seems to preserve sufficient vitality for new developments, namely, music, is one which lends itself in a peculiar way as an expression to the pessimistic temper. Once more the age is vocal with social plaint, the cry of thwarted or postponed political aims. The masses of the leading European communities seem to be learning to ask whether the monstrous inequalities with respect to the material conditions of well-being are, after all, an eternal and immutable ordinance of Nature, though they have not yet

arrived at the hopeful point of a distinct perception of the means of amelioration. On the other hand, the characteristic trait of our age, rapid material growth, tends to set up a coarse and limited ideal of life, which only makes the absence of loftier aims the more keenly felt by the more discerning order of mind. How can men who have had visions of universal equality and fraternity find consolation in the spectacle of a plethora of material prosperity confined to a mere handful in the crowd, and serving only to throw out into bolder relief the prevailing emptiness?

We have no doubt at all that the gorgeous political dream and the profound political disappointment or disillusionment of the French Revolution, had, and still has, an enormous influence in confounding the aspirations of our Western poets, at least of all those—and they are likely to be among the most numerous of the poets for generations to come,—who find the thought of suffering multitudes, of misery on a large scale, intolerable; and who, when once they have realized that this is the inevitable result of the existing law of society, feel as if their imagination had grasped the conception of something like an evil law of nature, or, still more terrible, an evil God. Poets naturally dwell with more passion than any other class of men on the disappointed desires of human life, and dwell on the disappointed desires all the more, when they have satisfied themselves that theirs are not selfish desires, but are, like the utopian visions of Shelley, passionate aspirations for the renovation of that suffering humanity, which, in its present condition, is, when you get to the dregs of it, as hideous as it is miserable. We do not doubt at all that modern pessimism does really owe a great deal of its ardor to the poets, especially to voluptuous poets, not so much because they are voluptuous, as because the same characteristic which makes them dwell so constantly on the gratified or suffering senses of men, blinds them to that aspect of life in which it is seen that disappointment becomes the condition of the truest vision, and that suffering is transmuted into the rarest power. For this is the point of view which modern poets,—and especially poets whose imagination dwells habitually on pleasure as it so often does,—seldom seize. It was because Wordsworth seized it, that the great social catastrophe which drove so many poets into pessimism, raised him to the highest point of his visionary power. No poet of mere desire ever felt, as Wordsworth felt, the true significance of desire,—

the world of power that is secured to man by the control and defiance and defeat of desire, or the higher uses and secrets of cravings that are never satisfied. He alone loved to dwell upon the sorrow

Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.

Rare, and, as a rule, hard and passionless are those poets who can dwell on the sufferings of mankind without shrinking from the belief that these sufferings are amongst the highest and most necessary part of man's destiny, who can dwell with any true poetical rapture on the thought that

Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready,—the dread
strife
Of poor Humanity's afflicted will.

But of those who can dwell on this, not only without shrinking, but with a certain exaltation, Wordsworth was the chief. For the most part, the modern poet no sooner realizes this necessity of human suffering on a large scale than he sinks into pessimism. The mere conception of the physical evils of the various climates of the world fills Leopardi, for instance, with such horror that he finds in it one of the main grounds of his pessimism, as his dialogue between an Icelander and Nature sufficiently shows. Yet even the commonest and most superficial philosophy has admitted that the necessity for strife with natural evils has been the root of progress to the savage and the barbarian, and is, in a more refined form, a principal stimulus to progress still. But this the southern poet, the poet to whom the evils of physical suffering seem intolerable, cannot realize; and it is because so many of our own modern poets seem to have moulded themselves in the same school, to have taken upon themselves to bewail every mass of human suffering as a final evil which they see no way to mitigate,—just as if there could be nothing indirectly ennobling and tempering in the suffering itself,—that there is such a tendency to pessimism in the poetry of our own day. We have quoted Mr. Symonds's picture of humanity, like the protomartyr Prometheus, "dreeing life's doom on Caucasus," because we suppose that, as this sonnet stands last in his series of pictures of the soul of man, he regards that as the outcome of the whole. But surely a poet

who could conceive of this as the noblest outcome of human idealism, should have reflected that while the fabled Prometheus had no power of suicide, man has such a power, and no need at all to "dree" a frightful doom, unless there be something noble, something grand, some ultimate and final conquest over evil, to be gained by dreeing this doom, — and that if this be so, there clearly must be a God over all the changes and chances of this world, both to prophecy to the soul, and to elicit, the final issue. Mr. Symonds himself has put this very finely in another sonnet, intended, however, to image only that phase of credulous hope which he ultimately merges in his very dismal conclusion. We will quote Mr. Symonds himself, as the best antidote to Mr. Symonds: —

Pathos of piety! Poor human brain,
In thine own image moulding God, to be
Victim and victor of sin's curse like thee,
Like thee submissive to the laws of pain!
Rising not up in anger to arraign
Heaven's justice, thou, with proud humility,
Didst own thy guileless guilt the cause why He
Who made Man's soul thus faulty, wrought in
vain!

Sad, tender thought, that God himself should
bow

Under the doom he graved on Adam's brow!
Logic illogical, that He who framed

Man thrall of sin, death's slave, for suffering
born,

Should on his own head wear that crown of
thorn,

And dying prove man's soul from death re-
claimed.

Why "pathos of piety"? If the suffering of man is to answer its purpose, as Mr. Symonds appears to expect, — or he would hardly urge man to take up voluntarily the part which Prometheus played involuntarily, — he must believe that there is a power, overruling that will of man which always strives to fly from anguish, a power inspiring him "to dree his doom on Caucasus." If it were not so, what is to prevent him from taking his fate into his own hands, and despatching himself, as Carlyle so often suggested that it would be an excellent thing for man to do? Yet if there be this overruling power which keeps us suffering while we need not suffer, which makes us feel how much better it is to "dree our doom" than to fly from it, what can that power be except one which loves a crown of thorns, which knows how much the crown of thorns adds to the power of him who wears it, and that the true conquest of pain is obtained by wholly submitting to its grasp, not in shrinking fearfully from that grasp?

A TRANSLATION FROM HEINE.

FÜR DIE MOUCHE.

(Heine's last poem, written a week or two before his death.)

I DREAMT a dream upon a summer night,
Where pale, dissolving in the moon's cold
glance,
Lay works of ancient beauty and of might,
Old ruins from the time of Renaissance.

And here and there in that encumbered place
Rose some bold Doric column all alone,
And looked the frowning firmament in face,
As if it could defy the thunderstone.

Prone on the earth lay shattered all about
Doors, gables, roofs, with sculptures from an
æra

When man and beast were mingled in a rout
Of centaurs, sphinxes, satyrs, and chimæra.

And in an open tomb of marble, fair,
Whole 'mid the ruin and the carven crea-
tures,
Wrapped in his shroud, but to the night-winds
bare,

A dead man lay, with pale, long-suffering
features.

Strong caryatides, with throats upreared,
Held him aloft as if with might and main;
And on the coffer's either side appeared
In low relief, a wild and motley train.

Here, glorious from Olympus, came the band
Of heathen gods, all flushed with lawless
passion;

But Adam and his Eve are close at hand
In modest aprons of the fig-leaf fashion.

Paris and Helen, Hector too, are here,
Troy's fall and fire what next we may dis-
cern is;

Moses and Aaron also hover near,
With Esther, Judith, Haman, Holofernes.

Here likewise is the god of Love to see,
Phoebus Apollo, Vulcan, lady Venus,
Pluto and Proserpine, and Mercury,
God Bacchus, and Priapus, and Silenus.

Here Balaam and his ass wait further on, —
The likeness of the ass is really speaking;
And Abraham about to slay his son;
And Lot for whom his daughters twain are
seeking.

Here before Herod sways the nimble child
Of her to whom the Baptist's head was
given;

Here Hell broke loose, and Satan here be-
guiled;

Here Peter showed and shook the keys of
Heaven.

And further change there was to ponder on,
When wanton Jove, bent at all costs to win
his

Lascivious will, chased Leda as a swan,
And Danaë in a shower of golden guineas.

Here Dian heads herself the eager press
Of kirtled nymphs, and deep-mouthed hounds
intoning ;

And here sits Hercules in woman's dress.
The distaff in his hand, the spindle droning.

Here Sanäi his cloudy front uprears,
There at its foot is Israel with his ox ;
And in the Temple here the Lord appears, —
A child disputing with the orthodox.

The contrasts side by side are sharply set :
The Greek light-heartedness, the stern God-fearing
Spirit of Judah, and the woven net
Of ivy-tendrils over all careering.

Then, wonderful ! The while, as I have said,
These carven fancies in my dream went by,
Sudden it seemed to come into my head,
The dead man in the marble tomb was I.

And bending down towards my resting-place
There stood a flower, — a flower of such
strange fashion, —

A flower that had so wild a charm and grace,
That people call it flower of the Passion.

Purple and sulphur-pale, from out the sod
Of Calvary, they say this blossom burst
When men had crucified the Son of God,
And shed His blood to heal the world ac-
cursed.

Blood-witness it is named, and you will find
That every several instrument of malice,
All tools of martyrdom of various kind,
It carries counterfeited in its chalice.

Each requisite of pain the flower adorns ;
From out its torture-chamber nothing fails :
The spittle and the cords, the crown of thorns,
The cross, the cup, the hammer, and the
nails.

And at my grave there stood a flower like this,
And bent above my corpse so still and cold,
With woman's sorrow, and with woman's kiss,
Prest hands, brow, cheek, and wept on un-
consoled.

Then, sorcery of dreams ! this flower of mine —
This blossom from the heart of passion
blown,

Had changed into a woman's likeness, thine,
Yes thine, my best and dearest, thine, thine
own.

Thou wert that flower ; yes thou, beloved
child, —

That from thy woman's kisses I was learn-
ing, —

No flower had ever lips so soft, so mild,
And never, never flower had tears so burn-
ing !

Closed were mine eyes, and yet with inward
gaze

My soul beheld thee standing still before me,
Ghost-like, illumined with the moon's pale
rays,

A beatific vision bending o'er me.

We did not speak ; but ah ! I could perceive
The inmost secret of your spirit clearly ;
The spoken word is shameless, may deceive,
Love's pure unopened flower is silence
merely.

Voiceless communing ! who could ever deem,
In tender converse which no ear might hear,
That time could fly as in my happy dream
That summer night so full of joy and fear ?

What we then said, oh ask it of me never !
Ask of the glow-worm what it says in shining ;
Ask what the wavelet whispers to the river ;
Question the west wind of its soft repining.

Ask the carbuncle of its fiery gleam ;
Ask what coy sweets the violet is betraying ;
But ask not what beneath the moon's sad beam
The martyr-flower and her dead are saying !

I have no thought how long I may have known
The calm refreshment of that marble chest
And happy dream. But oh, the dream was
flown,
And flown the all unwonted boon of rest !

Oh, Death and Silence ! bring my soul release,
Thou, only thou, canst give voluptuous bliss ;
The storm of passion, joy that knows no peace,
When life would give its best, it offers this.

But woe is me ! for sudden from without
Loud cries broke in upon my still delight ;
I heard a scolding, stamping, noisy rout,
And, ah ! my flower was trembling in affright.

Yes, just outside my tomb there rose and fell,
Disputing, swearing, yelping, idly jangling,
Loud voices, some among them known too
well, —
The bas-reliefs upon my tomb were wran-
gling.

Must lies still haunt the very stones, and can
These marble shadows fight for outworn
gloses ?

The startled shriek of the wild wood-god Pan,
Contending with anathemas of Moses !

Ay, this same battle rages evermore,
War 'twixt the True and Beautiful has been
And will be, and mankind as heretofore
Ranged in two camps — Barbarian and Hel-
lene.

They shouted, raved, swore, — all the rest of it,
There was no end of tedious controversy ;
But Balaam's ass had still the best of it,
And brayed down gods and saints, and knew
no mercy.

And at this vile eh-aw, which never ceased, —
This odious discord, truculent, defying,
In desperation at the stupid beast
I too cried out, and — woke myself with cry-
ing.

Academy.

EMILY PFEIFFER.